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THE MYSTERY

OF

CREATION AND OF MAN:

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A NEW VIEW OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

BY

L. C. BAKER.

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PREFACE.

THE forms in which the Christian faith is now assailed are,—

1. As to the Father. It is sought to destroy the idea of a personal God by obliterating the distinction between matter and spirit, and making nature the sufficient cause and end of all things.

2. As to the Son. His mission is reduced to the level of this natural system and compressed within its limits. All that assumes to transcend these limits, not excepting that transcendent miracle upon which the whole structure of Christianity rests, the Resurrection, is rejected or thrust out of sight behind that mythical veil which conceals the origin of all religions. In this view the perfected natural man becomes of right the Son of God and Heir of the world.

3. As to the Spirit. It is denied that He proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and speci-

ally from the risen Son of man, as that new creating energy by which all things are to be made new, both in the region of man's life and in that physical system to which he stands related. It is affirmed that all things must continue as they were, and that whatever renovation is effected in man, or in the system of things to which he belongs, must be wrought out by the well-known agencies of nature, and must proceed according to her fixed and unchanging laws.

And so the thoughts of men are turned away from Him "Who is and Who was and Who is to come."

This volume does not oppose these errors with scientific treatise nor yet with elaborate exegesis. It is made up of fervid pulpit utterances, which, while not disdaining the teachings of science, seek to carry some new light into her realms from Scripture, enabling us to look across her boundaries and to catch glimpses of the veiled face of our Father God.

And they project light, from the same source, upon the mystery of the Christ and behind the veil which now conceals Him, and show what meaning attaches to manhood in the light of this

manifestation of God and of the glory which is yet to be revealed. And they show what harvest the Spirit is ripening on these fields of creation, of which His first fruits in our hearts and bodies are the earnest and the pledge.

They are now sent forth upon whatever mission of instruction, of comfort, or of warning the God of all grace and truth may have in store for them.

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THE MYSTERY OF CREATION AND OF MAN.

I.

THE FATHER OF LIGHTS.

Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us with the word of His truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.—St. James i. 16–18.

The number of those who look upon it as a superstition to believe in God or pray to Him seems to be everywhere increasing. Few indeed deny that there is a Supreme Power, or primal force, the origin of all things. But is this "Power" in any proper sense a person? Is He a God and Father? What is His relation to this system of nature, all of whose forces move on fixed lines? And what is my relation to it?

Is my little barque of life, launched on to this tide of motion and of being, a stray waif running out to unknown seas, or shall it some day float

me into the presence of God, where I shall see His face, and know that He is my Father, and that He has been guiding me by an unseen hand across all these seas to a home in His palace and His heart?

Scepticism about God in these days has taken this special form. If it concede His existence at all, it seeks to remove Him from any personal connection with the orderly operations of nature, and with the bounties which flow to us through them.

Now, as if in foresight of the paths of error by which so many are being led away from the knowledge of God, whom to know is life eternal, Scripture records this warning, "Do not err. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down to us from the Father of lights." The assertion is that all nature's repositories of force were made and stored by Him, and that the whole system is freighted with ministries of mercy to man. And a reason for this is given: "Of His own will begat He us with the word of His truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures."

The title here given to God is significant. He is called "the Father of lights," or of "the lights," for the article occurs with the noun. This title is unique, and occurs nowhere else in Scripture. The 139th Psalm gives the clue to its

meaning. We are there exhorted to give thanks unto the Lord, for His mercy endureth forever. And among the mighty works of Creation cited in proof of His goodness is this: "To Him that made great lights, for His mercy endureth forever." The apostle here is directing our minds to God as Creator, not merely in a general way, but as the Author of the innumerable lights that stud the heavens. The term "lights" includes with the sun the whole family of which he is a member, the fixed stars which bespangle the midnight sky. These are all suns, great lights. And they are called fixed stars, because the designation here given to their Creator may be applied to them. They have no variableness, neither shadow of turning. The original word here has become one of the technical words of astronomy. It is "parallax." These fixed stars have no parallax or sensible change of position in the skies. Science, indeed, claims to have discovered by its delicate instruments a slight parallax in two or three of the nearest of them. But with these few exceptions, and these as the result of a marvellous scrutiny, these innumerable lights have no parallax. That is, they are so far away that, by observations taken six months apart and with a base-line the whole diameter of the earth's orbit, they give no appreciable angle of deviation. Their place in the heavens is unchanged.

And if this be true of these heavenly orbs, how much more can we assert of the Father of them that with Him there is no variableness. These multitudinous stars are all in motion and passing through vast changes, although they seem not so to us. "They shall perish, but Thou remainest: yea, all of them shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail."

This title, then, presents God to us as the Maker of these countless stars which shine by their own light through the infinite depths of space, and all the mighty forces of which they are the centres as ministers of His, that do His pleasure.

And what a large idea does this give us of our God! These heights and depths around us are strewn with stars like the sands on the sea-shore for multitude. Science has multiplied our powers of vision a thousand-fold. And as far out as she is able to peer she finds the near and the remoter shores of space crowded with their constellations, and these lighting the way to myriads more beyond. And the spectroscope has told us that the very same minerals and gases we find here on the earth compose the substance of our sun, and blaze in the photospheres of these countless suns. They are all made out of the same materials. One mind must have contrived and one hand have

formed them all. And of all these lights He is the Father who is also said to be the Former of our bodies and the Father of our spirits.

But still we have to ask, Why is this title employed in this connection? It would seem as if it anticipates the very objections we hear in these days against the doctrine of an overruling God, the Almighty Maker and Provider of all things.

Men argue that if there be a Creator of so vast a system, He surely cannot concern Himself with the minute care of all the tiny creatures who inhabit this speck in His domains. Astronomy, it is said, sinks this earth the Bible makes so much of quite out of sight. And then again, it is asserted, if there be a God, He has made the universe to be a system of fixed and unalterable laws. Its potent forces know no change and no defeat. Wise men tell us that this system is just as stolid and unyielding to the voice of prayer as is the moon to the baying of a dog.

This title, then, opposes itself to all these atheistic or naturalistic conceptions. It asserts that behind this vast and rigid system there is enthroned a Father. That it should be an orderly system is only a proof of the perfect wisdom with which it was at first adjusted. There is no need of rectification or amendment. But it is also a beneficent system. Behind these huge batteries

of natural forces there is a benevolent director of them all.

Even science teaches that these lights in the heavens are the repositories of those mighty forces which pervade all space and sustain us and all things in daily being. Here on the earth, the little nook of creation with which we are most familiar, it was these all-pervasive forces that rounded its nebulous mass into a world and diversified it with continents and seas, and smoothed its wrinkled surface into the lovely hills and dales among which man was placed. They have tempered its climate into this happy equilibrium between heat and cold, and stored it with mineral wealth and clothed it with verdure and mantled it with beauty as a fit abode for the intelligent creature who was to be placed upon it. And they now ripen its growing crops and fill it with fertility and abundant food for man and beast. Even human science confesses this, and traces back these beneficent effects to the sun, primal source of light to the earth, and to the universal forces that flash from all suns. It bids us behold in these the source of every good and perfect gift.

But Revelation takes us one step further. It not only takes us to the threshold of this temple of the skies, but bids us enter and behold therein the face of our Father. It teaches us not only that He framed and now manages this wide and

complex system of forces, but that He specially has made them to be the bearers of His bounty and love to us. They are the jewelled fingers on His hand by which He reaches down to us every good and perfect gift. The long fingers of light and of electric energy that reach down from sun and stars, that search out the seed buried in the ground and warm it into life and fruitfulness to give us food, are the fingers of His loving hand. These hidden forces that paint for us the landscape and tint the clouds with gold and crimson in the evening sky are part of His thoughtful, tender ministry to us. And equally all our social blessings are rivulets from the same stream of bounty. These invisible forces of nature, how little we know of their influence upon us and over us. They are potent in all the influences that mould society and nations. They control the development of every individual life. They have power to bless and to curse, to smite and to heal. They fill the mountains around about us with horses and chariots of fire.

And this suggests the inquiry by what right science, which traces back the phenomena of motion and of being to these forces, assumes that they are simply material and unintelligent. The only system of forces in nature or in history which the Bible recognizes is an intelligent system. The executive forces of "the Father of lights" in

creation bear such names as these,—"Angels, Principalities, and Powers." These names imply intelligence. They transcend the sphere of the material. They are spiritual powers. It is a false and fatal mistake to assume that these forces, of which science can take some cognizance, but of whose real nature she is ignorant, are blind, unthinking agents. Scripture does not so regard them. If it does not positively identify these spiritual forces called "angels" with the great forces of nature which we call light, heat, gravitation, and so on, it implies that the connection between them is most intimate.* And this gives a new force and beauty to the statement we are considering, that operating through all these forces, compelling them to be the messengers of His care and bounty to us, is their Father and ours, from whom cometh down to us, through their ministry, every good and perfect gift.

And here we turn aside to enforce a special lesson from this passage. The apostle had been speaking in this connection about the transient fickle good which men pursue when they are drawn aside after their own lust and enticed. He urges them not to be thus decoyed. For all true and substantial blessings every perfect and well-

* Heb. i. 7, revised version; Ps. xviii. 10; civ. 3, 4, etc.; Rev. xiv. 18.

rounded gift will come to them from Him who made all things, if we do not err from His ways. And whatever short-lived good a sinful course secures, we shall find ourselves running abreast of that eternal tide of blessing which God set in motion when He made the worlds.

But we pass now to consider the statement annexed to the declaration we have been considering, that all good gifts come down to us from the primal source of creation's lights. "Of His own will begat He us with the word of His truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures." Here we are introduced to the reason why God so constructed this system of the universe as to make it a store-house of blessings for us. Here also we get a glimpse into this mystery of creation which science cannot give us, which the wisdom of this world never dreamed of. It is here intimated that this universe of worlds is a great field which God is tilling for a harvest. He has a certain kind of fruit He wants to produce upon it. Mere boundless wastes of fiery suns are not what He is seeking in this system of creation. He wants it peopled with living intelligent creatures. Here on the earth He has ploughed and tilled and raised successive forms of animal life, each series higher than the last, until, last and highest of all, He has produced man, made in His own image. Even evolution teaches this.

Now, in an important sense, this human race are the first fruits of His creatures. The one perfect member of this race was the Archetype toward which the whole system converges. (Coloss. i. 15.) He is the Ideal Man, the First-Born of every creature. And although this Perfect Type or Image of God was not attained in Him and cannot be in us, except through death and new creation, yet in this transition stage of being, while yet we bear the image of the earthy manhood, this race, in virtue of its present likeness to God and its future possibilities, is the noblest harvest yet ripened on this soil. It is not said of angels, however near they may be to Him, that they are God's embodied image. Man, so far as we know, alone sustains this dignity. And science, so far as it speaks at all upon this point, seems to confirm the supposition that nowhere in the universe is there a creature so linked to God in origin and destiny as man. It asserts that the nearest of all the heavenly bodies, the moon, cannot be inhabited. It fails to find the proper conditions of cosmical order and chemical equilibrium suitable for the abode of such a creature upon any of our sister planets in the solar system. They all seem to be in some one of those formative stages through which the earth, in its previous geologic history, has passed. You could never find a home for such a creature as man amid the hot and vapor-

ous masses with which Jupiter is belted, nor among the incandescent vapors of the sun. And all the other visible bodies of the universe are similar suns.

There is nothing, then, in science which contradicts the Bible statement that man, made in God's image, is the first fruits of His creatures. On the other hand, modern astronomy, which has advanced far beyond the speculations of Thomas Dick and other glowing writers, who wrote splendid lectures about other inhabited worlds, now dispels this fanciful imagery with the stern and somewhat modest statement that, *so far as she can see,* she does not find anywhere else the same favorable conditions for created life as exist here on the earth. Such conditions may exist indeed in other solar systems. All that can be affirmed is that science has revealed nothing which contravenes this statement of Scripture, that the first fruits of God's creatures, the most advanced and ripened harvest that has yet blossomed out upon these sparkling fields, is this race of men. And therefore we can better understand why they are stored with blessing for us. The purpose He had in mind when He framed these worlds was to crown this system of His works with an embodied image of Himself. The fiery nebulous vapors that first filled all space were created as they were, because they were to contain the substances and the forma-

tive energies out of which man was to be evolved. These rounded the earth into shape because she contained within her womb this anointed race. The 139th Psalm implies this when it sings, "I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the *lowest parts of the earth.* Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Observe here how the Word of God reverses and puts to shame the speculations of men. Men would look upon the human frame as the proficient product of a tentative struggle in nature up through lower forms of life until this higher has been reached. As if she had been blindly struggling after more perfect organism under no higher impulse than a general tendency toward improvement. The law of "the survival of the fittest" is put forth as adequate to account for this result. Whereas the Bible represents the creation of man as definitely in the mind of God at the beginning of the series, and all its lower links as preparatory thereto. So that man derives his importance, not in that he is the highest product of a long series of previous lower organisms, but these lower forms derive all their importance from the fact that they prefigure man. They are

rude draughts of the more perfect model which was to be hereafter fashioned, and all of whose members were shaped and wrought out in the thought of God from the foundation of the world.

We go back, then, in order to find the purposes of our creation, to the point where the Bible conducts us, "before the worlds were made." And so we find a good reason why He made these worlds of light to be store-houses to us of every good and perfect gift. We were to be the first fruits of His creatures.

But while all this is true, in a general way, of the human race, truth compels us to state further that only a select class of this favored race is reaching toward the end of its creation.

While humanity, as such, is a first fruits of creation, Scripture speaks about a first fruits company from this race of mankind. Indeed, this designation is specially limited and applied by St. James to Christians, those who have been begotten "by the word of His truth." Scripture is replete with references to this anointed race.* Of them Jesus is the First-Born and the Head. He is presented in the New Testament as a newly-created man. He was first on earth as an earthly man, in the likeness of sinful flesh. But, passing through death, He arose on the other side of

* Rom. viii. 29; Coloss. i. 18; Rev. xiv. 4.

it in a higher order of manhood, a glorified and immortal man. Hence He is styled "the Beginning of the Creation of God," "the First-Born from the dead." The grand archetypal Image of God, the pattern of manhood, which He had in mind when He made the worlds, was at last produced. And so when He rose from the dead He took His rightful place, as the Son and Heir of God, on the summit of this system of creation. All its principalities and powers were put beneath His feet.* He was truly the first fruits man, first begotten from the dead, the Image of the Invisible God, the appointed Heir of all things.†

But Scripture also teaches that He is the First-Born among many brethren. There is a church of the first-born, whose names are enrolled in heaven, who are predestinated to be conformed to His image, and who are therefore joint heirs with Him. This is the royal race of whom these words are strictly true: "A kind of first fruits of His creatures." They are to stand in the front rank and to wear the crown of this vast empire. They are to be set over all the works of His hands.‡ Babes and sucklings they may be now, as the 8th Psalm teaches, of this dying race. But out of their mouth has God ordained the strength that shall still the enemy and the avenger; that

* Ephes. ii. 18–23. † Heb. i. 2. ‡ Heb. ii. 6–11.

shall rescue the earth and all these blighted fields from the destroyer's reign. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under their feet. And through them, after their resurrection from the dead, shall the lustre of God's grace and bounty be diffused not only over the earth, now mantled with the curse of sin and death, but over wider and wider circuits of creation, until all its waste and fiery fields shall blossom out into life and beauty, and become vocal with His praise.

All this, and more than we can express or conceive, is implied in this and kindred passages of Scripture, which teach that we, who have believed on Jesus, and have been made partakers of His life, are now a kind of first fruits of His creatures.

And so again we see a new force and beauty in the previous statement that God has stored all creation's lights with blessing for us. This was His most cherished thought in their formation. To this end He hung them in the firmament. To this end He first marshalled and now directs all the forces that traverse these boundless plains. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" On the silent wings of these forces, which men call by such names as Light, Electricity, Gravitation, but concerning whose true nature they know but little, on their darting pinions flashing from

star to star, across inconceivable chasms, leaping down abysmal depths, searching out the buried seed and raising it up into an hundred-fold as food for us, stealing into our chambers on the wings of the morning, folding their wings around us in the darkness of the night, shielding us from the pestilence that walketh in darkness and the destruction that wasteth at noonday, bearing us up in their hands lest at any time we dash our foot against a stone, these invisible messengers are our loving guardians, our bounteous almoners, bringing down from their Father above and our Father every good and perfect gift to us, whom He has designated to this high honor, to be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.

Yea, more, St. Paul, in the epistle to the Romans, warrants us in going further. He represents the whole creation, not only as charged with this ministry of mercy to us; it awaits with longing desire, as a mother waits for her unborn child, the redemption of our bodies and the time of our manifestation as the sons of God.* Their outbirth into the glory of the new creation shall be her rest and joy. So closely has God bound up this mystery of redemption with this mystery of creation.

And if our eyes are anointed with the eye-salve

* Rom. viii; 19–22.

of His word, if we truly prize these great lights kindled on its pages to guide us through the darkness of this present time, no false lights of human wisdom or science can ever obscure in our souls the light of this bright and Morning Star.

Nothing shall close our eyes to the fact of God's presence all around us, of His loving ministry of mercy and of chastisement, too, through all this system of laws and forces to which we are now subject. Beyond Sirius, beyond those vast fields of light across which Orion leads his bands, we shall discern the shining of this greater light,—"The Lord God is our Sun and our Shield." All nature will seem to us alive with God, and we shall see His hand and feel the warm beating of His heart in all, and all its agencies of good or ill will seem but fingers on the hand by which He is leading us up along our pilgrim path on to the heights of eternal life and glory. There no veil of created things shall any longer hide from us the full vision of our Father. The veil will be lifted, and we shall see Him face to face and know Him heart to heart.

II.

THE WORD MADE FLESH.

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.—St. John i. 14.

No Scripture phrase is more deeply significant than this, "The Word of God." Christ is the complete revelation to us of the Father. Hence He is denominated "The Word." Of Him are predicated the titles, the acts, the names, and attributes of God. "Without Him," St. John affirms, "was not anything made that was made."

It was the special mission of this beloved apostle to present this mystery. The Word, of whom he writes, is not an attribute but a person, who, from everlasting, has been the outgoing of the Father in the works of creation and redemption. This divine Person, he tells us, was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Such is the great mystery of godliness. Jesus Christ, who we know was man, was truly God. The Christian confession concerning Him is that of St. Peter, "We believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." On

this Rock the church is built. And he that so confesses is born of God.

As this is the foundation-truth in the Christian scheme, by which it stands or falls, it is not surprising that the chief assaults of unbelief have been from the first aimed against it. Perhaps from no quarter has it been more plausibly assailed than from the teachings of science, falsely so called. Since the time St. John wrote, "All things were made by Him," science has revolutionized the common conception of the universe. Then men thought the earth the greatest thing in creation. Now we know it to be but a speck in the mighty volume of star-dust the breath of God has rolled through boundless space. A drop to the ocean, a grain of sand to its wide stretch of shore, is all that the earth is to the universe. And yet we are confronted with the amazing announcement that the Maker of all these worlds was born a babe in Bethlehem. "He was made flesh and dwelt among us." "The world might have believed that," says the sceptic, "eighteen hundred years ago, but the advanced science of our day pities its credulity."

But let us see whether this cavil, so boastingly put forth, has any ground even in reason or science to rest upon. It is a sufficient reply to it to say that there is something grander in creation than all this material glory. The mind that is able

to investigate these subjects, that can reach over these vast spaces and measure these huge orbs, that can range on wings of light through these trackless depths and pay its intelligent tribute of praise to the Maker of these countless worlds, is greater than the worlds themselves. Jesus taught men that the whole world was not of equal value with one human soul. And this mass of worlds, considered as agglomerations of matter, are not worth so much. Moreover, the element of size provides no standard by which to measure the thoughts and ways of God. Before Him, the Infinite, all finite things are equally great or small. If the earth were millions of times larger than it is, and man proportionately enlarged in person and in faculties, the disproportion between him and his Maker would not be one whit the less.

But this objection takes much for granted that is not allowable in an argument that pretends to base itself on the exact teachings of science. It assumes that this multitude of worlds are inhabited, and that these inhabitants are as high, if not higher, in the scale of being than man. But for this assertion it gives no proof. No one has ever seen or conversed with these alleged beings. True, the Word of God speaks of angels. But the objector who will not submit to that Word in one thing must not appeal to it to sustain another.

If the appeal be to that infallible source, we discover there that redeemed man has a higher place in the counsels of God and a higher destiny than angels. "Know ye not that ye shall judge angels?" This assertion that the universe is peopled by creatures like man is all conjecture, and cannot be used in any way to discredit a plain statement of the Bible. Indeed, science herself, so far as she is able to teach anything on this subject, seems to contradict the assumption. She is not able to find elsewhere the conditions under which human life exists here. She affirms that this planet was in existence an inconceivably long period after "the beginning," before man was placed upon it, and that the bodies nearest to it, with which she is best acquainted, the moon and sister planets, do not give evidence of the same settled condition of things that we find here. Before the earth became the fit abode of man there were vast convulsions and deluges, and commotions of land and sea and air, that would not admit of his existence, much less his development into the social and civilized man of our day.

Mighty forces, chemical and mechanical, wrought on this globe for ages before it was well rounded and its wrinkles smoothed into the lovely hills and dales among which man was placed. We might infer, *a priori*, the improbability that the

planets, with their varying distances and motions, would all come at the same time to such equilibrium and repose. And this inference the observations of science confirm. There is good evidence that the forces of nature have not so thoroughly done their work on the other bodies of this solar system. The body nearest to us, the moon, is without an atmosphere. Jupiter and Saturn seem to be immense fluid masses, shrouded and belted with humid vapors. The telescopic appearances of the planets indicate a cosmical condition similar to the earth's, in the formative stages through which science insists she passed long before man was created. And if it be true that the period of his existence here, compared with this period of preparation, is extremely small, even the argument from analogy favors the supposition that these other bodies are not yet the abode of any such race of beings. That God should leave them still without such inhabitants is no more improbable than that He should have left the earth so long.

As for the fixed stars, we know that they are suns, luminous with mighty fires that feed on the same elements which the spectroscope discovers in our sun's photosphere. And as for the invisible worlds revolving around them, what we know of them is all conjecture; so that it is presumption to affirm, as it would be wholly to deny,

that these innumerable worlds are peopled with creatures as high in the scale of being as man.

There is no valid argument, then, from the immensity of creation against the Bible statement that the Word, by whom all things were made, was made flesh and dwelt among us. He came for the good of something more precious even than these illimitable fields of sparkling suns. Moreover, there is no scientific evidence against the view which Scripture favors, if it does not directly teach, that nowhere, through these wide realms, is there a creature so linked to God in origin and destiny as man.

But, are all these worlds then made for naught? Are these unbounded fields a barren waste, or have they no higher end than to reveal the glory of their Creator to us? Surely it would be folly and conceit so to affirm.

That these worlds are to be inhabited by intelligent subjects of the one kingdom of the heavens we may not doubt. But that these glowing fields of fire are yet prepared for their abode cannot be proved. Science affirms that the earth passed through immense cycles of preparation before it was ready for man. So that, to say the least, she is debarred from disputing that cosmogony which Scripture compels us to construct, and which assigns to the creation of man the crowning place in this whole material system, and makes him the

focal point around which the lines of God's working turn, as they sweep down from a past eternity and curve away into the eternity to come.

The order of the universe, as gathered from Scripture and science, we would state somewhat thus.

Of course there never was a time when God began to be. "He inhabiteth eternity." Co-ordinate and coextensive with Himself there was the outgoing of His essential being in the person of His Son, who is "the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father." So St. John begins, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This outgoing person from the Father is His agent in creation. "He created all things by Jesus Christ." The universe is thus an outflow of creative power and wisdom from Him in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead. And now science comes in to suggest, if not to teach, that these outflowing works of God were at first one mighty tide of elemental matter, in whose abysmal depths were hidden the forms into which it was to unfold. On the bosom of this chaotic deep the Spirit, "who proceedeth from the Father and the Son," the *formative* energy of God, as His *creative* energy is expressed

through the Son, moved. We speak now of the creation of matter. And yet what is matter? We know as little about it as we do about spirit. The tendency among able and even devout students of nature, like Faraday, is to regard it as a group of centres of force. But the crime and ignorance of science has been to regard the forces of nature as merely material and unintelligent. We believe that, from the first, embosomed in the vast profound, were spiritual powers, creatures of God, intelligent and mighty forces operating in this new realm of creation; working out the designs and the praise of its Author. These are the angels, the principalities and powers of Scripture, known to the dull perception of science by names which suppress the idea of intelligence and life, such as light, heat, electricity, gravitation, affinity, but which the word of God warrants us in believing to be the sons of light, which it represents as from the first rejoicing in and over His works. Any one who has examined Scripture on this point would be surprised to learn how closely it associates and even identifies the angels with all ordinary and extraordinary operations of nature. These mighty powers, vivified and controlled by the Almighty Spirit of God, have been at work in this realm of wonder from the time that light flashed from pole to pole of the huge orb in which were then rolled up the constellations and systems

of the heavens. They lighted the fires of that mighty forge on which the worlds were cast, and from which our sun is but a scintillating spark. And they are still at work through this vast domain, doing the good pleasure of Him who covereth Himself with light as with a garment, who "maketh the winds His angels, His ministers a flaming fire."

But to what end have they been working? Why have the dark depths been lighted with the innumerable watch-fires of the encamping hosts of God? Why are their curtained tents pitched over the boundless blue of space? It was, from the beginning, in anticipation that God was, in a marvellous way, to show forth His glory in creation and make a full unfolding on its platform of all the attributes of His exhaustless being. To this end creation, proceeding from Him, was to be brought into marvellous accord with Him through the creation of a new order of being, differing from angels, linked to the world of matter, subject to its limitations and liabilities, and yet made in the image of Himself and so linked to God. The mystery of evil was to be allowed to do its work in this new realm and upon this new creature of His hand that, in the discipline of conflict with it, he might gain a wider experience and be prepared for his high destiny. Satan was suffered to impose his yoke of bondage to corruption upon

the creation which God had made, and upon man placed upon its summit. But the promise was, that the mystery of evil should be rebuked and disclosed by the revelation of a greater mystery of godliness, by which the fallen sons of men, redeemed from sin and death, should be made the appropriate and efficient instruments of showing forth the glory and the grace of God in the ages to come, and over the field of creation to be disenthralled at their manifestation. This plan, therefore, required that some sheltered nook in the universe should be made ready for the introduction and abode of this new creature, man. A planet in this solar system, out of innumerable systems, was designated. The earth was chosen on which the mighty powers before referred to, which men call the powers of nature, have wrought to produce a settled order, such as we do not see elsewhere. No other planet of this system, and certainly no one of those furnaces of blazing fire we call fixed stars, presents such an aspect of chemical equilibrium and cosmical order as we find here, where sun and moon and stars of light, fire and hail, snow and vapors, stormy wind, mountains and all hills, fruitful trees, and all cedars, unite not only in praising God, but in sustaining and blessing man. Man then was placed here, the crowning work in the whole series of the works of God, the Monarch of creation; the

earth, the most perfect work yet cast up from the depths of this seething sea of fire, and man upon it, the pearl of great price, which even the Lord of glory came to seek and find.

And how did He come? He was made flesh, and dwelt among us. He took upon Him our nature, and entered wholly into the sphere of this human life of suffering and conflict. He carried our nature triumphantly through all; paid down the wages of its sin, which is death, that, through death, He might destroy him that hath the power of it; and carried it through resurrection on to the pinnacle of power and of glory. God, in the person of His Son, has thus taken man into perpetual union with Himself, and crowned him king of this dominion. And, in lifting up man to His throne, He is lifting up the whole system, of which man was made the head, out of its transient eclipse, into the eternal order and beauty of that new creation, in which the glory of our Father God, which we now see through the veil of things temporal and through a glass darkly, shall be revealed to us face to face and heart to heart. His Son, who made all things, as Jesus the Incarnate Word, once dead, but now alive for evermore, is the appointed Heir of all things. The First-Begotten of the Father from eternity, in this new relation and order of being, He is now the First-Begotten from the dead, whom, when the Father

raised, He declared to be His Son, and commanded all the angels of God to worship, giving Him lordship over all kindreds of the earth, and all the hosts and realms of heaven. And this, His passage through humiliation and death to this glory, was that He might become the First-Born among many brethren. It was to bring many sons unto glory. So that we are brought face to face with the amazing, the unspeakable wonder, that this mighty work of creation was begun, and has been carried on, and this earth was selected and fitted up, that, through conflict and triumph over evil, there might be born and trained here that anointed race who should be let into the deepest secrets of the mind and heart of God, who should be, in the highest and most sacred and endearing sense, His sons, the heirs of His estate, and the prime ministers in the coming administrations of His kingdom, that shall flood the wide fields of space with a brighter effulgence of His glory than that which sparkles from suns and stars. Man, in resurrection glory, linked by embodied being to the material world, and yet in origin and by new creation made one with God, shall be the golden bond in that heavenly marriage of the future when the whole creation, like a beauteous bride, shall stand suffused with the light and radiant with the loveliness of God.

We have no sympathy, then, with those dwarfed

conceptions of the ways of God in creation and redemption which make man to be a miserable, solitary rebel in a remote and insignificant corner of one of His provinces, whom it were a pity to let perish without a great effort to rescue. That he is a sinner is, alas! too plain. That he has passed under the power of death is sorrowfully true. That he is, in the sight of God, insignificant, is also true in one aspect; in another, he is the pivot around which turns the whole plan of creation, as it has been unfolding in the ages past, and sweeps away into the ages to come. He is nothing in himself; but the good pleasure of God has made much of him. He will never achieve his destined greatness, except, as in union with the risen Jesus, he shall rise into the rank of excellent being which He has attained. Many will not enter in through unbelief; but a royal seed shall not fail to come to the same joy and honor, who shall inherit all things, and be kings and priests unto God forever.

The discoveries of science, then, in these last days, instead of disproving to the devout believer the Gospel on which all his hopes are based, have only disclosed to him sublimer views of the wisdom and grace that stooped to his low estate. They have uncovered depths before hidden, and lifted him on to splendid heights in the knowledge of the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our

Lord,—the one theme which he shall explore with delight forever, but never exhaust; for it filleth all the fulness of God. They have immeasurably enlarged our conception of the works of Him who has taught us to call Him Father, and given us views of His eternal being and wisdom and power of appalling magnificence. But they all tend to magnify the riches of that grace which has let itself down to us that it might lift us up forever.

Welcome, then, the most advanced teachings of all true science. They let us more into the mystery of the love of God in our salvation. The doctrine of the Word made flesh gives us who believe the key that unlocks the arcana of the universe. We see the plan by which the worlds were framed. This sublime masonry of suns and stars is crowned on its summit with a cross; and on that cross a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The structure is not too grand and costly for such an altar. And on the platform, where stands that cross, and around its base, there is being gathered that royal company who are to be kings and priests in this temple of the skies, which the glory of God and of the Lamb shall lighten. A few short graphic strokes of St. John's inspired pen sketch out this plan of ages, which the wisdom of this world could never find out, which its princes did not know, else they would

not have crucified the Lord of glory. "In the beginning was the Word. . . . And the Word was God. . . . All things were made by Him. . . . The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. . . . To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." This is His manner of love to us, he writes in another place, that we are now the sons of God, although it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but when this mantling veil of things visible is rent and His glory is revealed, we shall be like Him and appear with Him in glory.

In the light of these reflections, the importance of that cardinal doctrine of our faith, the resurrection of the dead, is apparent. There are many fascinating speculations nowadays that etherealize into emptiness the grand verities of revelation, making embodied life to be the lowest form of life, and affirming virtually that there is no resurrection of the dead. But the doctrine of God our Saviour affirms that the highest form of life and being has been embodied. The whole drift and energetic action of creation has been toward the production of a creature that should be fashioned out of its materials into an image of God. The First Adam, of the earth earthy, was made such an image. Sin and Satan were suffered to pollute and deface the image for a while; but only in order to its reconstruction after a perfect

model in Him who, as the Risen Man, is now the Image of the Invisible God, the First-Born of every creature. The Second Adam is the Lord from heaven. It would seem as if God Himself would take on a form, not indeed to enhance His own happiness, but that He might communicate of His ineffable fulness to His creatures. The Word was made flesh, died for our sins, and was raised again in the power of an endless life, the Type and Fount of pure and indestructible manhood, set in the highest heavens, the model and the goal to which He would bring us. The being clothed upon, then, with this glorified humanity at the resurrection, is as essential to this plan of ages as is the keystone to an arch. The stock of this human family is the noblest tree that has blossomed out on the field of the universe, the grains in whose soil are stars; and that stock has yet ripened but one fruit, one Risen Man, the corn of wheat that fell into the ground and died and rose again, the germ of springing harvests that shall make this wide field glad with golden sheaves, and vocal before God with perpetual joy. It is this embodied immortality, this incorruptible manhood that bears the stamp of God's own image, to the production of which He has been working through all the ages, for whose manifestation the whole creation now waits as an expectant mother travailing to bring to light the kingly

race whose birth shall be her rest and joy. And through this race, not of disembodied spirits, but of men, who come to their immortal manhood at the redemption of their bodies, shall the designs of God in creation be unrolled in the ages to come.

Here, also, has run the line between truth and error in every age. Men have always been seeking after an idea or image of God. The invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, have compelled them to the search. But the universal tendency has been to deprave this idea, to deify the forces of nature, and to compress the glory of the incorruptible One within the limits of the corruptible forms of the creature. Hence all nations lapsed into idolatry. From the idolatrous mass the Jews were separated to conserve and exhibit the true idea of God. Any attempt to worship the One Lord through the likeness of anything in heaven, earth, or sea was the crowning sin to an Israelite, to be punished with death.

But why is it thus wrong to look for God in these works of His hands? Has He not, through these forms, made known to us Himself? To this His word, from its first announcement of the fall and the consequent curse upon the creature, replies that these forms are not now a just expression of the uncreated One. They are preliminary, made subject to vanity. Their fashion passeth

away. And the earliest promises involve the subsequent revelation of the great mystery of godliness, in which the true idea of God, the express image of His Person, was to be disclosed.

The Bible does, from the outset, recognize the justness of the universal instinct of men to look for God in some outward form or expression of Himself. While it commands them away from the creature, and declares their crime and condemnation to be the worship of it, it is full of promises and types of a subsequent manifestation of Himself. Now, in these last days, He hath so made known Himself. Men beheld His glory, the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, the Son of David according to the flesh, but declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead.

Here, then, is the only true Idea and Image of God. Creation reveals that idea only as these works of God sum themselves up in Him as their crowning mystery, and as they are refitted to show forth His glory. These works were, indeed, from the first, designed as the platform on which the Image of the invisible God was to be set up. In this sense Jesus is said to be the beginning of the creation of God. But it was to be for a while shrouded by an eclipse of sin and death before it should finally mirror forth the glory of Him who created it. Hence His glory must first be veiled

in human nature. In order to redeem it He must become subject to death, and rise above it in that new form of being which creation was intended to display, and the human race hereafter to embody. He is now the Head of the new creation, who, when the scaffolding of things seen is taken down, shall be revealed as the Image of God in His temple of creation. But it is not Christ Jesus after the flesh, but as glorified in resurrection, that is this image. This explains why no traces of the appearance of His person in the flesh are left on record, and why even the traditions of it were lost from the church, and why it is now idolatry to worship images and pictures of Jesus. The attention of the church was directed away from Jesus after the flesh to Jesus glorified.* The adoration of the crucifix is the mark of her degeneracy and shame.

But it is not alone among idolaters, pagan, and Christian, that this true idea of God has been lost. Among those to whom a purer faith has long been preached, even within the precincts of the church, this same degrading tendency is painfully manifest. Multitudes who call themselves Christians find their highest idea of God in the forms and forces of this present natural system, and in humanity as now constituted, although they may not

* 2 Cor. v. 16.

employ images to represent the idea to their minds. This present evil world they regard as the platform on which His promised kingdom is to be set up. Man must seek and find regeneration in his advancing knowledge and power over nature and in his own self-culture. The end of all this is the natural man crowning himself as God's image in this temple of nature. If there is any knowledge of Christ—and there is much pretence of it—it is "only after the flesh," as a great teacher and reformer. There is no knowledge of Him, either in His relations to humanity or to creation, or to the plan of God that shall issue in its deliverance. He is not owned as the Christ of God. "This is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come." Alas! it is fast waxing to its most presumptuous height.

And now, concerning the many false ways in which the wisdom of the world conceives of God, we know that an idol or a mere human idea of God is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many and lords many), to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." We, who know the Lord, crave no other God than this. Here our soul's deep want is met.

Our sin, the great barrier between us and God, is put away. The mysteries of being and creation are explained. Our own future is lighted by Him along a path of peace and blessedness, and up those splendid heights along which He ascended when He arose out of death, leading captivity captive. And as science unfolds to us the wonders of the universe, and proves these wreaths of shining mist above us to be woven from the scattered sunbeams of worlds as countless as the leaves of the forest or the sands on the sea-shore, it is our joy to know Him as now Lord of all. The thrones and dominions and principalities which represent the mighty forces at work in this domain were all made subject to Him when He rose from the dead. He has re-entered this temple of the skies as the God-man, and resumed His sovereignty over all the potent agents that traverse these glowing fields of fire, to plough and till them for that harvest of glory to be reaped thereon to His eternal praise. The highest seat of power and dominion in all this realm of wonder is the body of the man Christ Jesus. The highest effort of all these forces, working from the dawn of creation, is to rear a throne and prepare an empire for that royal race of which He is the First-Begotten from the dead.

We do not think of Him as merely enthroned among shining ranks of angels, the recipient of

a homage that terminates upon itself, but as now constituted head of that system of mighty forces that surge and play through the boundless gulf of space, sprinkling its dark depths with jewelled worlds, tossing their sun-gems along its shores as thick as pebbles on the ocean strand, rounding them in the fiery surf that beats on that eternal shore, polishing them in their own diamond-dust, and fitting them up in order and beauty to flash forth forever the glory of Him who created them.

But lest this view of our inheritance in Him seem too vast and vague, His Word also assures us that the administrations of power and blessing that shall finally gladden this wide waste of worlds shall begin here on the earth. Here, where He was put to death in the flesh, must He also set up His throne, until on the earth every tongue confess Him Lord. And finally the new heavens and earth shall be the metropolis of that everlasting kingdom, extending itself in ever-widening circles to the utmost confines of space, and causing its barren solitudes to blossom with infinite forms of life and intelligence and beauty.

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS?"

III.

WHAT IS MAN?

What is man?—Ps. viii. 4.

No question can be proposed to men of greater interest than this. It meets us at every turn in this mazy path of life. It demands attention at every shifting of the scene in this wonderful drama of human history. It confronts us at the bedside of the dying.

Let us look, *first*, at some of the diverse elements that enter into this problem; *secondly*, consider some of the ways in which men attempt to solve it for themselves; and, *thirdly*, let us see what the Bible has to say about it. What is its answer to this significant inquiry, "What is man?"

There are many phases in which this question presents itself. We study man physically and find that he is only one, the highest indeed, in a series of animal races peopling this planet.

And this creature is but frail and perishable. He dies, as the brutes die. He has an intellect, by which he is able to scale the stars and pry into the secrets of the universe. And yet hardly is

his eye lit with the lustre of this divine intelligence before a film of death steals over it and shrouds it in rayless darkness.

And this creature, too, seems to be born to trouble, insomuch that grave philosophers, like Schopenhauer, have recently joined hands with the suicides in affirming that human life is not worth living. For it seems to be only a series of victories crowned with defeats; a cup of delights with the bitterness of disappointment in the dregs. As well not to be a bird of song, we are told, as to be forever beating your life away against the bars of the cage that shuts you in. Even the Bible, from this point of view, surveying man wearing his life away in baffled attempts to win a glory which only fades like a flower, declares, "Surely man, at his best estate, is altogether vanity."

And then, considered morally, what a strange creature is man. He has capacities of goodness, of virtue and tenderness, which assimilate him to God. And yet he has an irresistible tendency to evil, which sometimes drags him down to the level of brutes, and even of demons.

There are thus many sides to this question, "What is man?" and we must be careful not to take up with any one-sided answer. On the one hand there is much to impress us with the vanity, the weakness, the selfishness and meanness of man.

On the other we are equally impressed with his greatness. The very earth is made sublime as the theatre of his achievements. We are amazed every time we set ourselves to think about the attainments and the possibilities of this strange being. Man has a feeble body which ties him down to earth. And yet we find him roaming among the stars, weighing them, measuring their distances, inspecting the materials that compose them. He invents a telescope and peers into the depths of space where the gathered beams of a thousand suns have trembled into darkness. He constructs a spectroscope and compels these suns to tell him what substances feed their mighty fires.

And here, on the earth, we see him founding empires, building cities, transmuting these rough materials of stone and clay, and iron and timber, into magnificent palaces or quiet homes for his abode. We see him running iron roads across continents and floating bridges across the oceans. Nothing is more suggestive of his greatness and daring ambition than one of these huge iron ships, from which, as from a fortress, he bids defiance to nature in seeking to confine him within narrow limits, conquers her elements of wind and wave, and compels them to do him service. So also we see him invading the realm of nature's hidden forces, putting on them a harness of steel, compelling them to drive his steamers and give wings

to his locomotives, and to do more in his workshops than if every one of them were filled with such giant workmen as old Briareus, who had a hundred hands and fifty heads. So also does he overleap all limits to intercourse, stretching a network of wires from city to city, and even under the seas, and compelling the lightning to flash his thoughts almost in a moment around the world. And he is even learning to transmit his voice audibly over long distances. If he cannot have ubiquity for his person over the earth, he will have it at least for his thoughts, the expression of his soul.

Such are some of the phases in which this wonderful composite being, which we call man, appears to us. And these are some of the elements that enter into this inquiry and make it so startling.

But passing next to observe how men answer this question for themselves, we notice first that most men act as if they were children of nature, put into the world to live off of it and make the most out of it. Hence, as Jesus says, the things which the nations seek after are, "What shall we eat and drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" This may be called the naturalistic view of what man is.

But many take a higher view than this. They recognize in him a higher element than that of mere animal life. They believe him to be in-

vested with noble powers and capable of indefinite improvement, if only the barriers which obstruct his progress were removed and he could be allowed to fairly adapt himself to the laws which prevail in this system of things. Nature has given him the lordship of the world, for which he must prepare himself by proper education, by physical and mental culture, by reforms in society and government. This may be called the rationalistic or the humanitarian view of man. It makes his true goal of being to be perfection in this world.

But beyond these solutions of the mystery of man, we have in these days certain attempts of an undevout science to throw light upon it. Viewing him as the centre and the product of this wonderful system of nature, she has come to the front in the endeavor to explain this mystery of man; and yet confessedly she has not found the origin of life nor pierced at any point the veil that shuts out from her lenses the realm of the soul. Some of her devotees refuse to believe that there are any wonders of spirit beyond her ken. Hence we see a battle raging around this vital point, "What is man?" between atheistic materialism and Christianity. Man is declared to be only the last in a series of tentative efforts by which nature through untold ages has been reaching out after a more perfect form of being.

But even if this be true of his physical being,—even if it could be demonstrated that his bodily organism is lineally descended from the apes, which were themselves evolved from previous lower forms,—and that all life on the globe is but an ascending development from protoplastic germs, we are no nearer getting rid of the necessity for a creating God, as the Author and Energizer of the whole system, than we were before. Nor do such explanations account at all for man's spiritual nature, that part of his being which science cannot inspect nor analyze, and to which some of her votaries seem strangely blind. Nor, if proved true, would they preclude us from accepting the Bible statement of the special creation of this man of a higher order, the Adam, endowed with a spiritual nature and made capable of union in eternal life with God. It is one of the strangest things about this question of ages, "What is man?" that, in this nineteenth century, amid such evidences of his noble origin and destiny and conquests over nature, of which the investigations of these scientists are a striking proof, some of them should be trying to prove that man is only a childless waif, floating on this great stream of life without a Father and without a future, a mere bubble tossed up for a moment out of this seething caldron of nature's forces, and sinking back again into its pitiless

bosom as into a bottomless abyss, without God and without hope. Into such blindness concerning this mystery of man do men sink who do not begin their investigations from the right centre. Still is it true that "no man hath seen God at any time," and that no man can find Him except as the Son shall reveal Him. If we first come to Christ and accept Him as the revelation of the unseen God, then all these wonders become lighted with a glory beaming from His face, and, instead of a remote mechanic or a primal supreme force in this system of the world, we get a Father who hath loved us from the beginning, and who is drawing us by all the lines of light and power, along which He has been working from the dawn of creation, to that knowledge of Himself which is eternal life, and to that loving union with Himself which is blessedness supreme and everlasting.

We turn, then, from these purblind conceits of the worldly and natural mind concerning man's origin and destiny to consider the Bible answer to this great question, "What is man?"

And here at the beginning we are met with the surprising announcement that man was made in the image of God. St. Paul puts it in even a stronger way, "The man is the image and glory of God." Here is a statement which at once explains the immense superiority of man to all the

forms of animal life beneath him. The man has a nature allied to God and capable of fellowship with Him. We are not surprised, therefore, that he has an intellect capable of indefinite expansion. There is no explanation of the immense distance between the chattering intelligence of a monkey and the vast sweep of a mind like that of Lord Bacon that can begin to take rank with this: "Man was made in the image of God." Nothing less than this accounts for the difference between the forest homes of the apes and a splendid city like Paris; between a group of chimpanzees in the woods and the Peace Congress at Berlin.

But we are told further that this creature, made in God's image, was invested with dominion over the lower orders and over the earth. We have already alluded to some of the ways in which we see this statement verified. We see man everywhere asserting his ownership and title to dominion over God's works. He has not scrupled to invade even that domain which Scripture often alludes to as the invisible side of creation. This is the home of those angelic forces which move on the wheels of this created system and flash on viewless wings through all its heights and depths. He has found ways of yoking even these secret forces of nature which we call by such names as heat, electricity, etc., but which the Bible views as angelic powers, to the chariot wheels of his progress.

And we cannot deny that they were included in his original grant of dominion. These forces have been working for his benefit from the time when God first set in motion this flood of light and fire through space, and broke it up into shining drops of worlds. They have been the fingers on His Almighty hand by which He framed and fitted up the earth for man's abode. These forces seem from the first to have recognized man as their coming king and to have prepared his way.

And yet we must recognize the fact that they now yield him a reluctant service and homage, as if his right to rule them were yet in dispute. Often they mock his attempts to bind them. They make him pay down dearly in toil and tears and blood for his success. How many hundreds of lives, for instance, have been lost in bringing the art of steam locomotion to its present perfection and safety. Now and then an ocean steamship goes down with its precious freight of hundreds of lives, as if in sardonic mockery of man's attempt to rule them. And so with the invisible gases confined in gunpowder and other explosives. They often burst their fetters and scatter death and destruction around. Or sometimes a conflagration lays waste a splendid city like Chicago, or enwraps a hotel or a theatre, crowded with despairing victims, in its fiery shroud. All this teaches

that man's dominion over these forces of nature is as yet temporary, limited, and provisional.

And this leads us to notice another very important feature in the Bible account of man. It is that of his sin, by which he forfeited both life and title to inheritance in this system of God's works. Sin came in to mar this noble creature of His hands, and to defeat His gracious purpose to crown him king. And the wages of sin came with it, which are death. So that after all it seemed as if the image of God, which He had set up on the summit of His works, had turned out to be only a grinning skeleton.

But not so. God cannot be defeated in any of His purposes. Known unto Him are all His works from the beginning of the world. Even man's sin was not outside of His eternal plan. For He meant to recover him from it, and, by means of the discipline of conflict with it, to train him for a far higher dignity than was given him at first. Hence He provided a Redeemer, a First-Born brother to the human race, who was also Son of God, who should have the first-born's right to redeem our lives and our inheritance. This He did by the one perfect sacrifice of Himself. And then God raised Him from the dead to that full dignity of man's estate which He had contemplated from the beginning, crowning Him as His perfected Image over the whole system of

His works, and putting all things on earth and in heaven beneath His feet.

And this leads to the important thought that the question what man is, and what does his Maker mean to do with him, is answered only as it is viewed in the light of this crowning article of the Christian faith, the resurrection of the Christ from the dead. We discover here that man, as at first formed, was only a clay model of the splendid figure the Divine Artist meant to produce as the express Image of His person. The complete, Ideal Man is the *risen* Man. And we reach that goal only as we die out of our old manhood through union with Christ and are made new creatures in Him. God's thought concerning us, from the beginning, was to bring us to the same rank of being, through the same gateway of death and resurrection.

But every son whom He receiveth He scourgeth. Such high honor is only won through tribulation. Hence we see why the present existence of man is so limited and frail and why he now holds so weak a sceptre. He is now under discipline, wrestling with evil and with trouble, a candidate for the high honors of immortal manhood. Before he can wear such a crown and administer such an estate, he must be trained by conflict. He must wrestle with the principalities and powers who are hereafter to be his subjects, and who

sometimes come down upon him in great wrath, because they know their time is short. This present strange and checkered experience, this conflict with evil, these holocausts of human lives by the fierce powers of nature, this bondage to death, are all explained when we know that this is not the final stage of man's existence, and that he is only passing along, by this way of conflict and the cross, the same path that Jesus trod, to the same splendid heights of immortality and dominion. For it is written that He is but the First-Born among many brethren, and that our Father hath predestinated us also to be conformed to the image of His Son.

We see, then, that the Mighty Builder of this framework of the skies hath now enshrined within it an Image of Himself, and that image is a risen Man.

We see, also, that man, receiving Christ, receives power through Him to become, not figuratively, but really, a Son of God, and, through resurrection, rises to the full rank and heritage of a Son. A son has his father's nature. So, in Christ, we are made partakers of the divine nature. A son is loved by the father as he loves himself. So God has loved us with a love which passeth knowledge and filleth all His fulness. A son is tutored and trained by his father to worthily fill the station in life for which he is designed.

So God is now training us by all this wondrous discipline of life for our high station. A son is heir to his father's estate. So we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. And when we speak of our Father's estate we are to take no narrow view of what that means. We have already seen that our brother-man, Christ Jesus, is on the throne of the universe. Its shining worlds are but the pavement beneath His royal feet. And all the forces that surge and play across its boundless fields are bound to His throne and do His pleasure. We cannot get away in the least from this grand fact concerning manhood and the purpose of the Father in its creation that a man, as the express Image of Himself, is now seated on His throne and made the Lord of all these wide dominions. Nor can we get rid of the fact that He is seated there as Head over all things to the church which is His body, and that we are to reign with Him. And therefore we cannot limit our answer to this question concerning man's future by any narrow bounds of earth. This earth is now his appointed possession. And the earth, we are told, is to be liberated and glorified with him. It will doubtless be the first theatre upon which God will display His gracious designs concerning him. But the earth is only a part of a vast system of creation, all of which is one system and one estate. The same laws and forces

prevail here as in those distant realms through which Orion leads his bands, and all along those shores where suns lie scattered like pebbles on the ocean strand. These are unexplored and perhaps uninhabited regions of God's great empire, parts of our Father's estate. And therefore we are not to limit His love toward us, nor fathom its boundless depths by any such short line of measurement as is the assumption that man is but a feeble creature of the earth, whose destiny is linked in with that of the earth alone.

For man, in Christ, is now made partaker in the eternal life of God. This life must carry with it everywhere the prerogatives of sovereignty. Nothing but a boundless creation can be a suitable theatre for a creature raised to the rank of God's Son, and endowed with His life.

We have reached, then, our final answer to this question of ages, and in the light of it the mystery of creation stands revealed. Man is that Image of God for whose production the quarry of the universe has been furnished, and upon which its angelic powers have been long at work; an image, first in clay and sadly marred by sin, but now restored in Jesus in lines of beauty and strength beyond the touch of time or taint of death. "*Ecce Homo!*" said Pilate (Behold the Man!). He spoke better than he knew. For even then, with visage marred and flesh striped

with thongs, He was the One Perfect Man. But the true goal of manhood, the way to which He came to carve out for us, could only be reached through His death and resurrection. And after He had passed along that way and taken His seat on high, then indeed the true *Ecce Homo* was heard through all the temple of the skies. The model of a Perfect Man had at last been reached. The completed and indestructible Image of God was at last realized. The fruit, for which these scarred fields of creation had long been tilled, had at last been gathered in, the first fruits of a coming harvest. The Man, for whose palace this masonry of suns and stars had been reared, had now appeared, the Representative of their Maker, and the titled Heir and Sovereign of all His realms.

All this we are ready to confess concerning Him; but we are slow of heart to believe what Scripture tells us, that He is there as our First-Born brother, that He is bringing us also to His glory. Man the destined lord of the universe! The thought seems so immense we cannot take it in. It seems so arrogant we dare not believe it. And yet, strangely enough, even science, in these last days, begins to accord with this Scripture teaching. She affirms that only on the earth, of all the planets of the solar system, has life reached so high a state of development as in man. Her

sister planets seem to be yet far down on the scale of cosmical order and preparation. While the fiery wildernesses of worlds around us, the fixed stars, cannot themselves be the abode of any such creature, although it would, of course, be presumption to affirm this of all the worlds that revolve around them. But so far as science can *observe*, she has nothing to object to, but rather confirms this Scripture view, that man, made in God's image, is the noblest creature that has blossomed out on these wide fields and the destined lord of them all.

We see, then, in the light of this Scripture teaching, the immense significance of the offer of eternal life, through Jesus, to men. It is an offer to bring them to the true goal of their manhood, and to make them joint heirs with Him whom the Father "hath appointed heir of all things." And we discover a new meaning in His oft-repeated warnings against the loss of this eternal life and dignity. Men may fail to reach this high goal of their being. They may refuse Christ, and so adjudge themselves unworthy of it. Such cannot hope to come to man's estate, nor to sit down with Christ on His throne.

Finally, Christians who are called by God to this fellowship with His Son may see a new meaning in their high calling. What boundless possibilities are contained in it! Can we wonder

that Paul was ever praying for his converts that God would enlighten them concerning the hope of their calling and the riches of the glory of their inheritance, and enable them to know something of this love of Christ, which is an ocean without bottom or shore, and which passeth knowledge, because "it filleth all the fulness of God"?

IV.

ANGELS, AUTHORITIES, AND POWERS.

Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, authorities, and powers being made subject unto Him.—1 PETER iii. 22.

IF a man "is gone into heaven," then the question about a future life for man is set at rest. The whole structure of Christianity rests on this statement that Jesus Christ, who was our fellow-man as well as God's fellow, has now ascended to heaven. A man, then, has safely passed the ordeal of death, and is now risen on the other side of it.

This question of a future life for man, which is thus so firmly settled in the Bible, has always been a mooted one in the ranks of unbelief, and grave doubts about it are entertained even in the circles of high and serious thought.

One reason of these prevalent doubts is found in the fact that modern thought has drifted so much away from the old phraseology in which the truths concerning the future life have been set forth. The world, especially under the teachings of science, has outgrown the language of a

more childish age, and is therefore disposed to reject the thing itself, because the dress of words in which it is conveyed is not in the fashion of the times. It is assumed, for example, that the existence of such things as "angels, authorities, and powers" is something which lies altogether beyond the range of our investigation, and which, therefore, belongs to the realm of fancy rather than of fact.

And yet we find abundant proof of the existence of *some* unseen forces, which we can investigate and handle, and to which science gives names, such, for example, as "gravitation." Now what if it should turn out that these agents of science are the same as those of Scripture?—that, instead of being blind forces or mere properties of matter, they are either identical with or are the manifestation of spiritual intelligent forces?* What if there be not only poetic beauty

* It is worthy of note that the latest broodings of science over the mystery of the relation between matter and spirit look toward this result,—the investiture of material forces with intelligence. The recent attempts to materialize spirit are likely to end rather in the spiritualization of matter. A late writer in the *Nineteenth Century Magazine* upon the "Fallacy of Materialism" asserts that the theory that "the universe consists entirely of mind stuff," and that "mental and physical phenomena, although apparently diverse, are really identical," is the one toward which all the greatest minds that have studied this question in the

but literal description in such passages as Heb. i. 7, which the new version renders, "Who maketh the winds His angels, His ministers a flame of fire"?

Thus does even sceptical science recognize the existence of a realm of invisible powers. These forces are mighty and pervasive, everywhere moving on the wheels of this complicated system of nature, filling the earth and the vast heavenly spaces with their activities, flashing on viewless wings through these immense regions, bridging the great chasms of space, and stretching their arms of power across the circles around which sweep the unnumbered worlds. The invisible side of creation is as real even to the eyes of science as the visible.

Now what does Christianity affirm? It affirms that this hidden realm of forces, forces to which man is now subject, is a realm of spiritual forces, and that the region of their activity is another region of life for man. It affirms that a man has already passed behind the veil into this higher realm of life. It declares that, in the resurrection of Jesus, a man was transfigured into that form

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right way are tending. This is certainly an approximation to the theory concerning angelic powers which runs through these pages, and which the Bible favors if it does not positively teach, that all natural forces are "angels," living intelligent powers.

of being which is suited to this unseen world, yea, that in rising into that realm he passed out of that condition of subjection to these cosmic forces, in which man was first created, into a condition of supremacy over them all. Manhood, which in this world is under tutelage and bondage to this system of forces, has, in Christ, been glorified to sovereignty over them. And this is the meaning of this passage when it asserts that Jesus Christ "is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him."

We have been accustomed to look at such teachings of Scripture too much with the childish eyes of a former age. Imagination has peopled this invisible realm with fanciful forms and depicted heaven as a far-off home of rest, where shining ranks of angels await the ransomed spirit and introduce it to scenes and occupations which have no resemblance to or connection with the things in which we are now interested.

Rather should we look at heaven as near us and all around us. And the angels of that unseen world we should recognize in the multitudinous forces of nature which are operating in all the wondrous forms of life and motion with which God's works are stored. And our Saviour, Jesus Christ, we should now think of as enthroned above all these forces, carrying on His redeeming work

through their agency, compelling them to execute His purposes of grace and of correction, and so preparing us, who have learned to call Him Lord, to take part with Him in that universal sovereignty by which He is subjecting all things in heaven and on earth to the will of God, that God may be all in all. To this end He, as our First-Born brother, first-born from the dead, has now entered this temple of the skies. Humanity in Him was cleansed and purified and transformed into the life and light of that unseen realm. And when He entered it all its potent forces recognized Him as its Lord. And we who believe in Him shall be lifted by His mighty power into the same eternal life and glory.

There is, then, a future life for man, a splendid boundless career. Every day, and all the time, we stand upon the boundaries and brush the outskirts of that unseen world. Its shining hosts go trooping by us on the wings of the morning. They make the clouds their chariots. Their blue eyes look down upon us from the sky. All nature is alive with their ministries. The purblind eye of science looks upon these forces as unintelligent hidden properties of matter. Oh, blind science! These forces are God's angels. They are ministers of His that do His pleasure. They are the intelligent eyes in the mighty wheels that move on the mechanism of the universe. And the

Spirit in the wheels is the Spirit of the ascended Christ, who is gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him, and being sent forth by Him as ministering spirits unto them who are heirs of salvation. And He is directing all this wondrous system toward that consummation of the future when He shall be *manifested* as its Lord, and when, the powers of evil being bound, heaven, the unseen world, shall be opened, and golden ladders of communication shall be set up between earth and heaven, and these two now sundered departments of God's kingdom shall be united, and brought into happy concord, and when His saints shall rise and reign with Him in that holy city which shall come down out of the opened heavens and hang out its banners of light and splendor over this long cursed earth, and when the tabernacle of God shall be with men and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people, and wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

V.

THINGS VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE.

For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him.—COLOSSIANS i. 16.

WE are here taught that creation has two sides, the visible and the invisible. The things we see are by no means the only real things in this created system. The invisible, indeed, occupies the first place in the thought of this passage. For among created things these are the things it specifies: "thrones, dominions, principalities, powers." Not seas, clouds, mountains, or stars are spoken of, nor any sensible objects, but certain hidden powers that pervade and dominate the universe.

In all ages men have believed in this reverse side of creation. The old mythologies were based upon this idea of nature as the home and the vehicle of hidden supernal powers. The lightning was the arrow of Jupiter, king of gods and men; the thunder, his voice. In the Bible these unseen powers are called "angels."

This is not only the frequent designation found

in the Psalms and the other poetic books.* The angelic agency by which the stone was rolled away from the door of the sepulchre was an earthquake. (Matt. xxviii. 2.†)

The science of our day concerns itself chiefly with the investigation of "things invisible." To these it gives names such as "light," "heat," "attraction," etc., assuming that these forces are not vital; that they do not belong to the realm of life and intelligence; whereas Scripture contemplates them as living, spiritual powers,—"thrones, dominions, principalities, powers." Even Christians are accustomed to think of these powers as having no special relation to this system of creation.

The passage we have quoted asserts that they constitute the other side of it. And it is implied that this side is the most important. Even science is ready to admit this of these forces as she conceives of them.‡ She has revealed to us

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* Ps. xviii. 10; civ. 3.

† Comp. also Acts vii. 53, with Ex. xix. 8, and Ps. lxviii. 17.

‡ It is only within the last thirty or forty years that there has gradually dawned upon the minds of scientific men the conviction that there is something besides matter or stuff in the physical universe, which has at least as much claim as matter to recognition as an objective reality, though of course far less directly obvious to our senses as such and therefore much later in being detected.—"Unseen Universe," p. 70.

that the things we see and touch are not the only real or important things in the universe, but that, concealed by them, there are other things demanding our attention of surprising interest.

Indeed, now and then, she seems to approximate the truth concerning these powers, as set forth in Scripture.*

Let us pass to observe some of the ways in which science conducts us behind the region of things visible into that of things invisible. A transition into this realm is first made for us by the microscope. It reveals to us arrangements of matter most curious and diversified. Below the surface of things seen there are highly-organized forms of creature life. And these creatures are built up of cells, which are a sort of primary molecules of animate structure. But these cells are themselves structures, and separated in size by ocean-widths from the material atoms which com-

* A late writer in the *Nineteenth Century Magazine* says, "I think it may help us to conceive of mind as existing altogether apart from matter if we observe that material powers and influences appear to be more influential as they become more subtle and more nearly immaterial. We may conceive, in fact, of a hierarchy of powers, in which the lowest grade contains the commonest push-and-pull forces of ordinary human experience; higher grades may contain the invisible forces of nature; and the highest of all may contain pure mind unmixed with baser matter altogether."

pose them. No microscope has begun to see the atoms which we are obliged to assume as the primary units of matter. We think we see material things, but in the structure of everything we look upon and handle there are unfathomed depths below our power to see, and which must be explored if we are to understand the real nature of the substance. Even chemical analysis only takes us a few steps into this region. When we say, for example, that water is composed of so many parts of oxygen and so many of hydrogen, we have got beyond the realm of sight indeed, into the region of invisible gases, but of the atomic structure of these gases and of the forces operating among these atoms we know almost nothing.

And this suggests that below the region which the microscope can penetrate there is this region of invisible vapors or gases. All the substances we see, if made hot enough, may be made to assume this form. All the matter of the universe, it is supposed, was once in the gaseous form. And a large proportion of it still retains this form. The earth is enveloped by a gaseous ocean some forty miles deep,—the atmosphere, a thing most real and yet invisible.

But there is a still more remote region of substances or forces among "things invisible." Still less obvious to our senses than the gases are the great natural forces. No man ever saw one of

these agents. We see only their effects. I do not see the light of the sun. I only see the things the light makes manifest. All nature is pervaded by these subtle, mighty unseen forces. They bridge over the immeasurable chasms of space. They move on worlds and systems of worlds in their courses. They carry on all the operations of nature. And they have their home, as science assumes, in an invisible ether, a vast fathomless ocean, in whose bosom all things float, and which fills all the heights and depths of boundless space. Can we wonder that this passage seems to contemplate "things invisible" as the most important part of this system of creation?

We observe also that the farther we penetrate into this invisible region the nearer do we come to the great active forces which energize and vitalize this system. We have already said that, while science views these potencies as dumb, Scripture invests them with life and intelligence, and speaks of them as "angels, principalities, and powers." And so it becomes neither difficult nor irrational for us to take one step farther into this invisible realm. Scripture bids us to take that step and to recognize spirit as the moving cause and the life of this whole system. Science conducts us to the borders of this spirit realm, and there she pauses and hesitates, unable to decide whether or not there is anything across the boundary. Some of her

magnates declare that we need go no farther than the forces of which we have spoken, and of which she can take some cognizance, to account for the origin and growth of all things. They stand baffled on this border line between matter and spirit, and because they cannot cross it, they become Sadducees and deny that there is either angel or spirit or a future life for man. Into this pitfall they stumble, because of their false and fatal assumption that life and intelligence pertain only to organized forms, such as we can see, and that the forces under which these forms originate and develop are themselves non-living. But this word of the Spirit, through Paul, illuminates with its flash this hidden realm, and reveals these forces as either identical with or the uniform manifestations of living powers. And so we are prepared for the idea of the Infinite, Omnipresent Spirit, the substratum, the cause, and the vital energy of all things. Thus does Scripture lead us with firm tread beyond the region of things visible and even invisible into the presence of God, the Eternal Spirit, Source of all life, Creator of all things, Former of our bodies and Father of our spirits, in whom we live and move and have our being. No man hath seen Him at any time. No man hath seen the great forces that are subject to Him in this domain, such as gravitation and heat. And yet we are certain

of their existence by what we witness of their effects.

Shall we therefore doubt the existence of God because we do not see Him? Or shall we deny the existence of an invisible spiritual world because it does not make itself manifest to our senses? Once admit the truth that all nature, instead of being ruled by blind forces, is pervaded by powers instinct with life and intelligence, and a whole realm of spirit is disclosed to us, one which touches and enfolds us more closely than does the realm of things visible.

And this realm of invisible powers must have its Lord of hosts, One God over all, blessed forever; and these hosts His ministers that do His pleasure.

But we pass on to remark that from the beginning of all things there has been a tendency in the invisible to become visible and manifest.

Matter, at first existent in gaseous invisible forms, has always been tending toward the solid and visible. The invisible powers, of which we have been speaking, have, for their vesture, these material forms. Nature is often spoken of as "the garment of God." It would be more true to regard it as the visible vesture of "things invisible." These creature forms are the *eidola*, the images of the powers of nature, and not of Him who is God over all. Hence Scripture everywhere

denounces the worship of God through natural objects. It calls it demon worship. (1 Cor. x. 20.) There is a descending hierarchy of these powers as well as an ascending. And even the highest are unworthy representatives of the Most High God. They veil their faces before Him, and He charges them with folly. (Job iv. 18; xv. 15.) This first chapter to the Colossians, however, teaches that even the uncreated God has His image, and that He has made Himself manifest in Jesus Christ, who, especially as risen from the dead, is now the perfected "Image of the invisible God." The unseen God Himself was thus to become visible in the form of One who, as the Archetype of all things, toward the pattern of which all things were made, and in whom they now consist or hold together, was to be crowned on the summit of this created system, the true Son and Heir of God and Lord of all. To this pinnacle of glory He was raised, as a man, out of death. And as the glorified man He is now the Image of God.

But He is now withdrawn from sight. The heavens have received Him. The clouds conceal Him. But the whole stress and drift of New Testament prophecy is toward His "manifestation." This Hidden One is to "appear." Every eye shall see Him.

Thus not only all "things invisible," but even

the unseen God and the hidden Christ tend toward "manifestation."

And now observe that "His appearing" is always looked forward to in the New Testament as the opening up to man of the realm of things invisible. It is to be the rift in the cloud land of things seen which shall let through the glories of things unseen. We read that He shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels. When He comes in His glory all the holy angels come with Him. All this implies that the heavens, the invisible world, shall be opened. It is for the purposes of man's trial and training that this unseen world is now veiled from him. He is now in darkness in respect to the true knowledge of God, and wanders far away from Him.

But, we read, when things invisible shall be illumined by the light of Christ's parousia, "the face of the covering which is cast over all people and the veil that is spread over all nations" shall be taken away, and they shall say in that day, "Lo! this is our God; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." (Isa. xxv. 9.) We read that the tabernacle of God shall then be with men, and they shall see His face. We read that a holy city, whose builder and maker is God, shall come to sight, and that even the light of the sun and the moon shall fade before the supernal light of that day,

as if the sun itself were but a shadow of a more glorious light beyond, the shadow passing away before the substance.

Thus in the economy of God all things, from the beginning, have been tending toward manifestation. Things invisible become visible. Secret things are brought to light. Even God Himself became embodied. And the hidden Christ, the Brightness of the Father's glory and the express Image of His person, must be revealed through the parted heavens which received Him out of sight. And the heavens shall stand open and all things be disclosed in the light of His presence.

And in order that we may not mistake as to these great promises of the future, we need to guard against the common mistake of divorcing the visible part of God's creation from the invisible, or of supposing that the realm of things seen is the only realm of life. The seen and the unseen are the two halves of one system; the one answering to the other and revealing it, now, indeed, as through a glass darkly. But hereafter the dark gates of visible things shall be thrown open, and we shall see the splendors concealed behind these walls. And, best of all, "we shall see Him." And we shall know God and see His face.

And here it will be useful for us to observe that the effort of mankind in these last days is

specially directed toward the conquest of things invisible. We bind an invisible vapor in a harness of iron and make it our strong untiring servant. It drives our steamships across the seas and draws our railroad trains swiftly over the land. The clouds of steam and smoke that escape from these swift messengers we might fancy to be angels' wings. They are much nearer being that than we suppose. And so we have trained the lightning to carry messages for us over the earth and under the sea and to audibly repeat our words. And we are compelling the same agent to light up our cities at night with shreds of sunlight. We are storing its dynamic energy in jars and boxes to be transported for use, like a can of milk or a keg of powder. And we talk of catching the mighty force of Niagara, and even of the waves of the sea, and conducting it by wires over the land for man's use. Such are some of the treasures opening out to man in this realm of things invisible, which he is only beginning to explore. But these treasures are won now at a fearful cost of toil and blood. These potent agents are not always docile servants. They often burst our bands and scatter death and destruction around. And our best triumphs are but faint fore-gleams of the wonders to be disclosed when unseen things shall be brought to sight with the manifestation of the Lord of this whole realm.

Not until then will man come to his true heritage of these works of God's hands. Toward this disclosure all things are tending. All nature, all prophecy points that way. Scripture is a written promise; nature, a parable of that grand issue. Human progress is all toward it, although much of it is but a blind, or, still worse, an arrogant attempt to climb into heaven some other way than up that narrow but shining path along which Jesus reached the throne of universal dominion. There is an arch-deceiver who has ever been misleading the human race as to its true goal, and the only method of reaching it. From the first he has been persuading man that he can make himself as God. But there is one who is working below all the deep craft of Satan to defeat him on the theatre and at the very crisis of his apparent triumph. God's plan cannot be thwarted, and He will finally lead man, although by a way he knew not, and which shall so humble him that no flesh will glory in His presence, out into the light of that coming day when the hidden glories of unseen things shall come to sight, and the hidden powers of the universe be made to acknowledge man as their lawful sovereign and to do his bidding, and both departments of God's universal kingdom, the visible and the invisible, the heavens and the earth, be bound together into one harmonious and universal kingdom.

In the light of this change, which is to pass upon this system of "things present," we can discern something of the reason why Scripture pronounces the things that are seen as "temporal," and why "the fashion of this world passeth away." We see also why this region of transient perishable forms becomes a region of temptation and discipline. Our great danger lies in our governing ourselves according to these things of time and sense. We walk in the light of the things we see, by faith and not by sight. We deem these tangible rewards of fame and wealth and pleasure the only things worth grasping. But the religion of Jesus is a voice from heaven, teaching us that the things we see and prize so much are transient and perishable. It tells us about a life to come, and calls upon us to lose this life in order to gain it. It tells us of a crown of life that fadeth not away, of a continuing city whose glories never decline, of an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, of a kingdom that cannot be moved, of a new heavens and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, and bids us, as did Paul, to count all things but loss that we may win Christ, and be found in Him, and so attain to the splendors and dignities of that glorified manhood in which He was raised from the dead.

Taken up, as we are so apt to be, with questions about our eating and drinking, our dress, our

planting and building; absorbed as we are in our counting-rooms and with our newspapers over the events of the day, busied as we are with speculations and schemes for money-making or for pleasure, oh, how we need to have our attention aroused and fixed upon things unseen and eternal! the fact that the true realm of our life is the one that overbounds and overtops this present; that only a thin door separates us from it and from God's presence which pervades it; that we are but pilgrims with our tents pitched upon these sands of time but for a night before we pass into the realm of the invisible, where is our eternal home. How are we prepared for the change? Not only are we moving rapidly into that unseen realm, but it is also crowding down upon us. Its hidden realities are fast coming to sight. The veil will soon be rent. The Lord is at hand. Soon we must face these mysteries and stand before the Son of man. May God enable us to look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal, and to endure to the end, as seeing Him who is invisible. And so when He shall appear we shall be like Him and appear with Him in glory.

VI.

THE PRINCE OF THIS WORLD.

Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.—St. John xii. 31.

The Scriptures make frequent mention of a powerful and malignant being, who is the foe of God and man, and the author of the world's evil. Thrice in these last discourses of our Lord he is spoken of as "the prince of this world."

In order to arrive at the meaning of this title we observe, first, that there are two principal words of Scripture rendered "world." The most frequent of these is *κόσμος*, the primary meaning of which is "order." This is one of the characteristic words of St. John's writings, in whose gospel alone it occurs more than seventy times, and who never uses *αἰών*. It refers primarily to this present order of nature,* and secondarily to mankind as developed into social and governmental forms under this world-system. Or, more concretely, it means the human race.† It also denotes the present order of things as the seat of

* John i. 10.

† Matt. v. 14; John iii. 16.

evil and sin and the source of temptation, as where we are warned to "Love not the world, neither the things of the world. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world, and the world passeth away and the lust thereof." (1 John ii. 15, 16.)

The second principal word is αἰών. This word leaves out of view the primary thought of the other, that of natural order, and of the world of mankind as developed under it. Its primary meaning is "dispensation." It refers to the course of the world within certain time-boundaries. And hence in the unfolding of God's purposes there are successive æons, or worlds. This world or "age" has its well-defined features and limits. In this view of the "world" the devil is said to be the god of it. (2 Cor. iv. 4.)

But especially and repeatedly is he spoken of by Jesus in this connection as "the prince of this κόσμος."

Let us now seek to ascertain the meaning of this title. So far as this word represents the evil systems which have grown up under this present order of the world, or the evil, whether physical or moral, which is intrenched in it, we have no difficulty in recognizing the meaning of this title or in confessing to the justice of it. We do not propose, therefore, to dwell upon these features of the

devil's sovereignty, which all acknowledge. Our purpose is rather to inquire whether, in explaining this title, we have any right to empty this word "cosmos" of the main part of its meaning. Has this malign and powerful being, to whom Scripture so often refers, and to whom it gives a variety of names, setting forth differing phases of his evil work, any control of this present created system? Is he in any proper sense the prince of this cosmos?

In the previous pages it has been throughout maintained that the universe is pervaded by *living* powers, which, if not identical with the forces of nature, are the agents by whom these forces are energized and controlled. There seem to be, however, two orders of these cosmic forces or angelic powers. Or, at least, there are two classes of effects produced by them. There is an ascending series of effects from chaos to order, from the inorganic to the organic, from the inanimate to the animate, from decay to beauty, from death to life, from sin or lawlessness* to purity and peace. And there is a descending series from order back to chaos, from embodiment to dissolution, from beauty to mire, from life to death, and from moral order to disorder and frenzy and destruction. Whether there are two hierarchies of these forces,

* 1 John iii. 4, R. V.

the constructive and destructive, a kingdom of forces beneficent and life-giving, and one of evil and death, or whether evil effects are due to the excessive and unrestrained actings of forces good in themselves, we may not determine. Scripture, however, seems to carry the idea, at least on its surface, of two separate kingdoms or hierarchies, the one of light, the other of darkness.

It is affirmed, indeed, that Jesus is now exalted Head over all principalities and powers, . . . and every name that is named in heaven or on earth. (Eph. i. 21.) But we read also that He has not yet put down all rule and authority and power. (1 Cor. xv. 24–28.)

Again, it is declared that all angels are "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." (Heb. i. 14.) And yet we are taught that we wrestle for the crown of life against a hierarchy of evil powers, "world rulers of this darkness and spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph. vi. 12, R. V.) While, therefore, all the forces of the universe owe allegiance to the Christ, some of them are not yet subdued to Him. And all evil effects, both moral and physical, are ascribed to their agency. They draw a trail of death through all the regions of created life. Every form of vegetable life has its enemy, its parasite or mildew and blight. Every animal is subject to disease

and to corruption. And he "that hath the power of death" is the devil. (Heb. i. 14.) *A fortiori*, he has the power of disease.* And the forces which produce these effects are seen to be the great natural forces which prevail not only on the earth but throughout creation. The sun smites by day, and the moon by night. For the origin of pestilence and malaria and noxious gases and poisons and the venom in beasts we must go back of mere local causes. The agencies that produce them are inwrought into the fabric of this created system. They are a part of its universal forces. These are all forms of the enemy's power. (Luke x. 19.) How close and vital and diffusive that power is we may learn from the ascription to the devil of such a title as "prince of the power of the air." (Ephes. ii. 1.)

Not only are there malign forces which perpetuate the reign of evil and of death. Even the beneficent forces of nature are sometimes armed with destructive energy. A cold wave from the north laden with magnetic and vital energies may bring also the seeds of death to hundreds of the feeble and the aged. The forces that are active in raising a storm at sea produce by their commotion salutary effects in the system of nature. And yet these forces may toss hundreds of human

* Luke xiii. 16; Acts x. 38.

lives into the dragon-jaws of death. When we read the accounts of appalling calamities on land and sea, in which hecatombs of human lives are slaughtered by these fierce powers of nature without a sign of pity, we do not wonder at the fearful indictment which some writers, like John Stuart Mill, have brought in against them.

Looking at the twofold front which the great forces of nature wear toward man, now his kindly friends and again his remorseless cruel foes, we may ask again, Are there two systems of these powers, the one of life the other of death? Or are there, back of them, two orders of spiritual powers, both of which are able to wield these forces so that they become in the hands of one ministers of life and blessing, and in those of the other ministers of wrath, as when Satan wielded them against Job? Or is the evil in them only an excessive and lawless energy, which is hereafter to be subdued and bound to the throne of Christ and made tributary of blessing to mankind? We may not be able to decide these hard questions. But of one thing we may be sure. These forces of evil and death, of which Satan is the prince, belong to this system of *cosmic* forces. If not identical with them, their connection is most intimate. We are to recognize that, for His own wise purposes of man's discipline, God has permitted Satan to usurp control in this cosmos. He is its prince.

And yet, as Jesus affirms in the text, this prince shall be cast out. The resurrection of Christ, toward which this saying is directed, was the triumph of the Prince of life. Henceforth not death but life was to be triumphant master in this cosmos. Its whole history, from the first, is a history of light triumphing over darkness, and life over death. And yet these victories were always followed by fresh defeats. But when the Christ was glorified in eternal life, and crowned head over all things, then the prince of this world, while not yet destroyed, was dethroned. And the Christ must reign until this enemy and his great ally, death, are destroyed.

We have seen, however, that this prince is not actually, only potentially, dispossessed. Still sin reigns unto death. And still the world remains as a battle-ground on which God's saints are trained for future warfare and dominion. Hence their present wrestling against principalities and powers.

These enemies are not the remote impalpable foes that we imagine. They touch us at every point at which we come in contact with this natural system. They gain access along all the avenues of this embodied life. As born under this present natural system, we are now in the enemy's country. The elements of nature, most necessary to our sustenance, such as the atmosphere, pertain

to His domain. (Eph. ii. 1.) Danger lurks not only in every passion, but in every necessary appetite. All this may help us to understand something of the nature of that far-reaching conflict in which we are engaged. It is a contest with powers that now usurp the inheritance to which redeemed man is destined, and who therefore come down against him in great wrath, because they know their time is short.

Knowing thus the forms of their attack, and our multiform dangers, we see the need of constant vigilance. We discover the lines along which we are to expect the enemy and how we are to stand guard against him. He meets us along all these well-worn avenues of our physical life. Unless we are armed against him here, we leave the most vulnerable part of our line of battle undefended. Evil tempers and bad humors of body are just as truly his weapons as evil suggestions to the mind. The one indeed breeds the other. It is a man's body which brings him into relation to this world-system. And it is the devil's work to debase or enfeeble or madden these life-powers of which the body is the battery and the home. Our hospitals and lunatic asylums and almshouses and prisons are filled with the wrecks he has made.

But One stronger than he has come to cast him out. He has spoiled principalities and powers and led captivity captive.

He has triumphed over the whole field of our conflict and won eternal life for man. And this is now His free and loving gift to us. Believing on Him, we get the victory, in the power of that life, over the world, the flesh, and the devil; and so become part of that Conquering Seed, of whom it is written, that the God of peace shall shortly bruise Satan under their feet

VII.

THE POWER OF DARKNESS.

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.—COLOSSIANS i. 13.

AMONG the phenomena of nature there is nothing more striking and suggestive than the contrast between light and darkness. The first creative act in the bringing of order out of chaos was the production of light. "Let there be light" is the first recorded word of Him by whose Word the heavens and the earth were made. And the successive stages of this sublime work are each marked by "an evening and a morning," light breaking in upon and driving away the darkness.*

This world is still the scene of the struggle between light and darkness. This is true of the natural world. But nature is but a mirror, reflecting to us the tokens and operations of spiritual

* It is an interesting thought that this order is never reversed. It is not a morning and an evening that make a day in Genesis i. Light triumphs over and displaces each period of darkness. Everything in creation and redemption moves forward in this order, until finally light remains the triumphant master. (Rev. xxi. 23-25.)

powers, which are the real permanent forces in creation. There is a realm of light and of darkness lying back of these things that appear. There is a struggle between the powers that rule in each, of which the processes of life and growth, of decay and death, in nature are the outward token. It is not merely by a figure of speech that the Bible speaks of this world as a realm of darkness. Its pages glow with the promise of a world to come, in which there shall be no night and no curse, and of which God Himself shall be the light.

And in contrast with that day of splendor, this present time is night, and the reigning influences in this sphere of things temporal "the power of darkness."

This phrase, "the power of darkness," implies that there is a personal agent who has originated and perpetuates these malign influences. He it is whom Jesus denominates "the prince of this world," and whose approach in the final struggle which was then upon Him, He speaks of as "the hour of the power of darkness."

From this power, the text asserts, God hath delivered us. And by way of contrast, the previous verse declares that He hath "made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

We shall now inquire, first, in what respect we were under bondage to this power of darkness, and, secondly, what is the character of our deliverance.

We have but little idea of the extent and ramifications of the evil power here specified. The terms in which it is described in the Bible indicate that it is a power coeval and commensurate with this existing order of creation, and that we become subject to it in the fact of our birth into this world-system. This "power of darkness" is felt not only in the hidden chambers of the heart, and in the reigning spirit of society: it pervades this natural system. And as our embodied being is developed out of this system, and is its microcosm, we become directly subject to it. We feel this power in all the depressing influences that debilitate and deaden our faculties of body and mind, and finally quench them into the grave. Satan has the power of death and of all the evil influences that produce it.

And especially is his fatal power felt in those who have known the stirrings of a divine life and are yearning after God. They often go "mourning because of the oppression of the enemy." (Ps. xliii. 2.) To know God and Jesus Christ His Son is to have the light of life. The power of darkness is put forth to quench this light, to stifle these heaven-born aspirations, and to keep us floundering in the mire and mould of sin. It exerts its potent energy through all the senses and appetites of our nature. The flesh, as the home and medium of the forces that control this natural

life, is pliant to its sway. The "lusts of the flesh" testify to its impelling power. Even its necessary appetites are avenues through which the "rulers of the darkness of this world" assail us. The whole sphere of our embodied life is the arena on which we wrestle with "principalities and powers."

This overshadowing power of darkness is not felt by those who are in bondage to it. It is like the atmospheric pressure in this respect. We know that our bodies are constantly subjected to a pressure on all sides of fifteen pounds to the square inch from the surrounding atmosphere. And yet we are not conscious of it. So the power of darkness rests like a pall and weighs like prison armor upon its subjects; and yet they do not feel it. But let a man try to escape; let him reach out after God and after that life of holiness without which no man can see Him, and he will soon discover that he is loaded down. Christians are the ones who know the most of this power of the enemy. Jesus measured and coped with its tremendous force to the utmost limit. He came to deliver man's nature from bondage to this present evil world. (Gal. i. 4.) And in that nature, He must struggle against its reigning power unto victory. In the pressure of this conflict He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. Nor was He, as we are taught in Heb. v. 7, insensible to the fear of death.

Every soul, born of God, knows something of the Christian conflict, as a struggle against physical forces which have power to enfeeble and deprave this embodied life, and to break down and scatter into dust the casket in which it is enshrined. But all do not know that it is along these avenues that we are to expect Satan's assaults, and that, in this region, we suffer under "the oppression of the enemy." Many good people make light of the idea that the devil has power to assail us through the body. They account for all its disorders by the operation of what they call natural laws, and smile when the idea of Satanic temptation is suggested. But the very meaning of the title "prince of this world" is, that somehow the power of Satan has come into the whole sphere of natural law. Scripture, indeed, recognizes no blind agents in nature. Its forces of nature are living powers. And among these forces is this tremendous power of darkness. All the ties which connect us with this system of nature become avenues for its malign influence. Bodily disorders are, therefore, messengers of Satan to buffet us, as was Paul's thorn in the flesh. Even such infirmities as that which bowed together, for eighteen years, the woman whom Jesus healed, and which might have been due to an ordinary rheumatism, He ascribed to Satan. (Luke xiii. 16.)

All this, however, does not exclude the thought

that the region of the mind is also pervaded by this power. We read that the god of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not. Their understanding is darkened. The opinions that men frame, in this condition, are formed with one set of their faculties, their spiritual organs, benumbed. They cannot discern the things of the Spirit of God. Hence we may know what value to put upon the political and scientific wisdom of men so disabled. It is foolishness with God. And the works of men in this condition are designated works of darkness, with which Christians are exhorted to have no fellowship. Not only gross sins, such as rioting and wantonness, strife and envying, are so denominated. But all contempt of God, all denial of His being and His truth, and of the approach of His day of judgment, which will be a day of light and glory, is proof that one is under the power of darkness, sleeping in the night. A man's soul may be aroused to great activity in some lines of thought and action. He may be what is called "a live man" in science, in politics, in business, or even in religion, and yet, in the view of God, he may be sleeping in the night under the fatal potions the god of this world administers. How little do men know of this subtle, fearful power of darkness, amusing them with all the signs of life and the phantasmagoria of light, and yet holding them spell-

bound under its stupefying sway. It is only when the Spirit of God arouses them to resist it, that they begin to realize how powerless they are to deliver themselves from this dire bondage.

But we pass to notice the character of that deliverance of which Christians are the subjects. For of them it is said, "Ye were formerly darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord;" "Ye are all the children of light and of the day. Ye are not of the night, nor of darkness." (1 Thess. v. 4, 5.)

We observe, first, of this deliverance that God has effected it. "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath delivered us." As the slavery was so abject and its consequences so fatal, we needed a Divine deliverer. Such an one we have in God. This chapter exhibits our deliverance as purposed by *His* loving heart and accomplished by His mighty power. This is the first lesson of salvation, that we are helpless, and that God is our loving, Almighty Saviour. We have said something of the extent of the power of darkness pervading this present constitution of the world and our embodied being as organized under it, for we "were by *nature* children of wrath, even as others." But this chapter summons us to contemplate and admire a plan of wider scope and a power of broader sweep, the eternal, resistless power of God, directed by a heart of infinite love,

interposing to rescue us from the power of darkness and translate us into the kingdom of His dear Son.

We observe, also, that the text speaks of our deliverance in the past tense. It is a thing accomplished. The victory of Jesus, in our nature, over all the power of the enemy, was our rescue. It was won for us. And when God raised Him from the dead we were also raised and delivered in Him. His conflict with Satan and with death was not for Himself alone. It was a great public transaction. He was the Second Man, the Lord from heaven. He stood for us in this trial. In the view of God, then, our deliverance is effected, although its results are being gradually and progressively wrought out in us and in the church. We were in Christ, in the sense that our new life and being were contained germinally in Him when He died for us and rose again. Hence we are said to have been crucified with Him, and quickened with Him, and raised with Him, and seated with Him in heavenly places. But this new life did not become actual in us until, in the way of faith on Him, we were born of God. And now it is possessed by us only in spirit, not yet in body. Hereafter, at the redemption of the body, our transformation and deliverance will be complete. But as this work is all of God, and cannot fail, as it is the sure and necessary result of that

eternal compact of grace which constituted us one in life and destiny with Christ from the beginning of all things, His Word is not content, especially when it brings to view the Divine side of this work, as in this chapter, to employ anything but the past tense. He *hath* delivered us.

A primary feature of this deliverance is the forgiveness of sins. This is brought to view in the next verse. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." The power of darkness must retain its hold upon us so long as we are under the guilt and power of sin. But such is our partnership with Christ in His great transaction that He, as our Covenant Head, paid our penalty and so redeemed our lives from destruction. And His death was the death of this old nature, born and reared, as we have seen, under the shadow of this realm of darkness, and hence the death of its sin. The old nature, it is true, has not yet actually died in us, nor have its sins been slain. They remain to hinder and distress us. But the Word of God is here presenting great results, as they appear to His mind, who sees the end from the beginning, and with whom former things are no more present than things to come. And it is the prerogative of faith to estimate these things, not as they appear to sight, but as God views them. And hence we are, by faith, to regard all our inborn and inbred sin, and

all our actual transgressions, which are the rivulets from this corrupt fountain, as forgiven. Just in proportion as we accept these full results of our redemption, and realize that we are cleansed, will we enter into and perpetuate that communion with God which is our life. Unforgiven sin is an impenetrable barrier between the soul and the light of His countenance. But when we accept His Word upon its face, and believe that God has graciously given us such standing in Christ as puts us on the ground of complete forgiveness, then the cloud melts away, and the smile of our reconciled Father brings peace and purity to the heart.

Moreover, this deliverance, which is here said to be accompanied by translation into the kingdom of His dear Son, introduces us into both the protection and the life of that kingdom. Its protection secures us from the machinations and assaults of the power of darkness. And its life, which is the eternal life of God, endows us with an energy which enables us to rise superior to all the downward drag of this malign power, and to death, which is the hour of its supreme action.

Still another item in our deliverance is here brought to view. We are said to be made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." This is also the necessary result of what Christ has done for us. Our Father is not satisfied with merely rescuing us from the power of darkness.

He has far better things in store for us than mere salvation. He has an inheritance prepared which, in contrast with the darkness of this world, is the realm of light.

His Word is freighted with the promise of a new creation, which shall supersede the old. These fair fields, the product of His creative power and skill, are not always to be eclipsed by this present darkness. A great light shall one day break through it. And Satan and his brood shall be driven into regions of outer darkness. And then, the day of glory, of which God and the Lamb are the everlasting light. Far deeper than the foundations on which Satan has reared the throne of his kingdom of darkness are those of that kingdom, prepared from the foundation of the world, spoken of in the text as "the kingdom of His dear Son." Into this kingdom we are even now translated. And such is the nature of the fellowship into which we are called with Christ, that for this inheritance of the saints in light we are even now made meet.

And for the accomplishment of this overthrow of the power of darkness, and our complete and eternal deliverance from it, the context assures us that the Father hath now raised Him to the highest seat in heaven. He contemplated, indeed, this grand issue from the beginning of creation. For we read here that by Him, who is our Deliverer,

were all things at first created, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven. And He is the Head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead. We have said something of the far-reaching power of the ruler of this world's darkness. But here we learn that our triumphant Lord made and holds in the hollow of His hand all these adverse powers. And, moreover, that they, in their blind rage, are themselves but workers in that eternal plan which shall issue in the exaltation of Christ and His church to the perpetual ownership and dominion over this vast heritage created by His hands. Around that throne, on which the Father seated Him as the Head of the body, the church, there now centre those lines of power and blessing that reach out to the remotest past and radiate over all the future, and which shall lift us, as by the hands of mighty angels, above all the downward pressure of the power of darkness and death, and out of the dungeon of the grave, until, with all the saints in light, we shall stand upon His holy mountain, transfigured and glorified with Christ, in raiment white as the light, and prepared to enter with Him upon those administrations of His kingdom, which shall fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory, and flood the heavens with a brighter light than that which shines from suns and stars.

VIII.

THE NATURAL AND THE SPIRITUAL.

Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.—1 CORINTHIANS xv. 46–49.

THIS passage occurs in the course of that sublime argument by which the apostle established the faith of the Corinthian church in the resurrection of the dead. No topic is more prominent in the sermons and letters of the apostles. In their view the resurrection of the saints was that arch of triumph which God is building over the chasm that separates earth from heaven, the realm of death from the realm of life; and of that arch the resurrection of Christ was the keystone.

In the first verse of this passage a general principle is announced, which pervades all God's works and ways, and in accordance with which the resurrection must proceed. "Howbeit that

was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."

Let us observe, first, how this principle applies to the works of God in creation, and, secondly, how it requires, as the succeeding verses state, our resurrection from the dead.

The human mind, in every age, has cherished the conviction that the works of God in nature reveal Him. The heavens declare His glory. And on the earth, fields, floods, and mountains, teeming with life and beauty, and pouring out their treasures for man's sustenance and delight, have ever spoken to him of God.. And yet, in every age, men have forgotten that nature is now but a shadowy and imperfect revelation of Him. It is crowded, indeed, with the symbols of His glory. It is a grand store-house of patterns of things in the heavens. But a symbol is not the thing itself, nor is the pattern of a thing that upon which our thoughts and affections should terminate. This prime mistake lies at the root of that universal sin of the race,—idolatry. The things that are made have been a veil, which God has hung out of heaven, inscribed all over with testimonies to things invisible. They have revealed His eternal power and Godhead. But men have mistaken the creature for the Creator. They have transferred to it their homage and service, and have crowded and shrouded the glory

of the incorruptible God within the limits of its corruptible forms. And hence their debasing worship and service of the creature. And this is still the germ of all ungodliness in our day and in Christian lands. Naturalism is now the great foe of Christianity. The great effort of the enemy, in every age, is to blind men to the knowledge of God, whom to know is eternal life, by substituting in their minds God revealed in nature for God revealed in Christ. Liberal Christianity, so called, is but a disguised form of this old error of the Wicked One. In subtle and unsuspected ways it summons men to the study and admiration of God in nature, as an adequate and supreme revelation of Himself, and reduces the meaning of the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus within its sphere.

But the distinctive teaching of the Bible as to this point is, that nature, as now constituted, is not the final and complete revelation of God; that it is merely the shadow of a concealed substance, the transient and corruptible form of that which is incorruptible and abiding; that the likeness of anything in heaven, earth, or sea, nor the likeness of man, as now subject to sin and death, is not an adequate image of God, but that Christ, the new and risen Man, is His only true image; that He, through resurrection, has become the Head and harbinger of a new crea-

tion, before which the fashion of things present passeth away. That which is natural waxeth old and must vanish away before that which is spiritual and eternal.

And yet, in the order of God's working, that which is natural must precede. It was His purpose, from the foundation of the world, to fill the wide realms of space with works of His hands, which should be forever lighted with His glory, and at the altar of whose temple His intelligent creatures should commune with Him and see His face. The heavens and the earth shall some day be so lighted with His splendor, and all created forms shall become the mirrors of His glory. But first, as preparatory to this final stage, and for the wise and mysterious ends of human discipline, He has constructed this present order, which is made subject to vanity and blighted with sin and death. That which is first is natural. He has made it the battle-ground on which the Light which shall bathe the new creation shall first triumph over darkness, and the Life, which shall be its animation and joy, shall first triumph over death. He has filled it with traces of things unseen and eternal; prophecies of things to come; promises of the beauty that knows no blight, the splendor that knows no waning, the life that knows no taint and no decline. But it is still a fading, evanescent system, "in bondage to corruption,"

waiting itself, with us, to be delivered into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

We are not, therefore, to despise this present world. For things present are the vestibule to things to come. We are to use it without abuse, and estimate at their true value the tokens of our Father's presence and the pledges of His care and goodness with which it abounds. Nor are we to despise the use of things natural, as avenues by which we attain to the knowledge of things spiritual. There are many ways in which this principle, "Howbeit that which is first is natural," applies to the regulation of our conduct in this present world, and even to the development of our spiritual life. But we are ever to keep it in its true and subordinate place. We are not to "set our affections" upon it. For it is of the very essence of the Christian's position in this world that the death and resurrection of Christ have set him free from bondage to it, and that his true life and portion lie no longer in the sphere of natural things, but in that spiritual realm into which Christ has risen, and in which our life is hid with Him. (Coloss. iii. 1–4.)

But we pass to observe that, as is the natural system, so, also, is man, its highest creature and exponent. He is first, natural. He belongs to this present order. The first man is of the earth, earthy. He is made out of the elements and

ministered to by the forces that pervade it. He is in bondage to its necessities and inflamed by its appetites. We notice that this passage does not describe a special class of men, such as are swayed by earthly desires and instincts. The teaching of the Spirit is that all men, the first and typical man from whom all are derived, are of the earth, earthy. He places this first man in contrast with another order of man, the spiritual, the Second Man, the Lord from heaven. As this present natural system is but a temporary scaffolding around that temple of creation, eternal in the heavens, of which God is the maker and builder, so the natural man is but a fleeting and perishable form of manhood, fading like the grass, to be followed by a new order of men who, in the power of an incorruptible life, derived from the Second Man, shall stand at the summit and enter upon the possession of the works of God in that day when He shall make all things new.

It is of the utmost importance to a correct understanding of the divine scheme of salvation, of which this chapter discourses, and whose issue is the resurrection from the dead, that we should clearly perceive, first, that this present system of substance and force, which we call nature, and which is shadowed with evil, is to be displaced by another system wherein dwelleth righteousness; and that there are distinct types or forms of man-

hood pertaining to each. The first man is, like the system to which he belongs, made subject to vanity and corruption. Over him, over the whole field of his enterprise and his grandest achievements, sin reigns unto death. The Second Man has been raised out of it and above it to be the Lord and Possessor of that coming order, out of which everything that defileth and maketh a lie is cast, and over which Satan can never again trail this dark shadow of death. Into the first order of humanity we are born by nature. To the second order we must be born from above, of God. That which is born of the flesh is but flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. And, except a man be so reborn, he cannot see the kingdom of God. For, as we all partake of the nature of the first earthy man, we all share in the sin which infected it and in the curse of death pronounced against it. "Such also are they that are earthy." And they cannot lift themselves out of this rank of being. This is a work of new creation. Only God can raise the dead. They cannot possibly constitute themselves worthy inheritors of the kingdom of God. For "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." And so we need an Almighty Saviour to bring to us an eternal life and invest us with a heavenly manhood.

And such an One we are here told of. The

Son of man came down from heaven. Because of His heavenly origin and nature, He was able to carry our flesh and blood nature unscathed through the trials and temptations of this earthly state. And then He laid it down in death, a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and rose again on the other side of death in that form of pure and spiritual and heavenly manhood which cannot sin and cannot die. And in this new rank and order of manhood He has become not only the Head of the new creation, but the source to us also of that new life-power, which becomes in us a power of regeneration; of renewal in spirit now, and hereafter of transformation in body also. In this way we, who are born at first natural and earthy men, receive power to become the sons of God. We are quickened into the life which is spiritual and eternal, and shall be raised to the same rank of heavenly manhood. For "as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." And the instrument by which this quickening power reaches us is the Word of God about His Son. To receive that Word is to receive Him. We are born again, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." (1 Peter i. 23.)

And what a glorious destiny is this! The First heavenly Man is now Lord of the whole unseen

realm of nature and of life. All the boundless fields of light, which God has spread through space, are His domain. All the powers that flash through this system and move on its wheels are His servants. He, as the Image of the invisible God, is the acknowledged sovereign of this vast estate, and it is being fitted up to show forth His praise. And we also, as sharers in His life, must share in His dignity. We shall bear the image of the heavenly manhood, which, throughout God's empire, must be acknowledged as the representative of His authority, the executer of His designs, and the channel of His grace and bounty.

Such is the meaning of that inspiring hope of the gospel, unto which we have been begotten, who have learned to love and confide in Jesus, who died for us and rose again.

We thus discover that the salvation, brought nigh to men in the gospel, is something more than escape from coming wrath. It promises something more than a safe harbor after the storms of this life, or an asylum in which we shall be forever sheltered from its ills. It promises something more than purity. It reveals a heavenly state which is more than inactive enjoyment or entrancing worship. It discloses a definite purpose of God concerning this present world. It must pass away. It heralds another, in which redeemed man shall

rise to the highest rank of being and possession. It affirms that man, as descending in the line of nature from Adam, is unfit to inherit God's kingdom, and reveals One who is Son of God as well as Son of man, who came to lift us into His rank of being, and make us joint administrators in His kingdom. We are to take part with Him in those administrations of power and blessing by which He shall first rescue the earth from the destroyer's reign, putting down all rule and authority and power, until even the last enemy, which is death, is destroyed: and by which He shall extend His benign and healing sway, in ever-widening circles, to the remotest confines of this created system. Such is the sublime trust the Father has confided to the hands of the First heavenly Man, "that He might reconcile all things unto Himself, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven." And in the execution of it, and in the glory which pertains to it, He is not ashamed to call us brethren. This, then, is our high calling in Christ Jesus, of which we are exhorted to walk worthy.

And this unspeakable boon is conferred upon the simple condition of faith; the faith which first accepts and then obeys, or acts as if it believed. Such reward no man can earn. Eternal life is the gift of God. In every sinner, who confesses his own vileness and unfitness, as an earthy

man, for God's kingdom, and who calls Jesus Lord, this life begins. The process by which it is imparted and nourished is mysterious, as are all the processes of life. Jesus compares it to the movements of the viewless wind. It is not necessary that we should be able to analyze or trace it. We are not to detect it by any process of introspection. Its beginnings, like those of natural life, may be all unknown and unmarked by us. We are only to concern ourselves with the Divine Source and Giver; and are assured that, trusting in Him, our faith is itself the dawn of life, and that He will fulfil in us this work of faith with power, until renewed in spirit by His transforming power, we shall hereafter be transfigured in body also into that form of heavenly manhood through which all God's great designs shall be executed over the field of creation, in the ages to come.

IX.

THE OLD MAN AND THE NEW.

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.—EPHESIANS iv. 22–24.

THESE and kindred expressions have a strange sound to a man who has not been taught by the Spirit of God to appreciate their meaning. Let us, then, inquire, What is this old man we are urged to "put off," and what the new man we are to "put on"?

It is obvious that there is a personal self to whom this exhortation is addressed, and who is responsible to obey it; and who, therefore, is not identical with either the old man or the new. I cannot be exhorted to put off myself, but an evil nature external to myself. Personality resides in the human spirit. This is now embodied in an earthy form, and, by reason of sin, it is enslaved in this natural system. Christ came to emancipate it from this bondage, to restore it to fellowship with God, and to endow it with eternal life.

There are two distinct types of manhood set

before us in Scripture, and only two. Some of the names which designate these and set them in contrast are "carnal," "spiritual;" "the natural man," "the spiritual;" "they that are after the flesh," "they that are after the Spirit;" "the old man," "the new man;" "the earthy man," "the heavenly;" "the first man," "the Second Man." And more definitely it speaks of the respective heads of these two classes of men as "Adam" and "Christ." As to the first man, we read that the Lord God formed him out of the dust of the ground. And hence he is spoken of as "earthy." Although endowed by his Maker with a spirit, he is a product of the earth. It yields the elements which compose and nourish his frame. He is said to have been curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. (Ps. cxxxix. 15.) He is the highest efflorescence of all the substances and forces of which the earth is the reservoir, and which pervade the universe. Hence he is also styled the "natural man." He pertains to this system of nature. So far as we can see, he is its highest creature. All the elements and forces, the "principalities and powers" of this created system, are somehow related or tributary to him. But this type of man is mortal. "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return," was the Creator's sentence upon him. And since then the Adam and all the successive tribes and generations into which the

first man has been multiplied have gone back to dust.

But this mortality is the result of sin. This "old man" dies because, as the text states, it is "corrupt according to the lusts of deceit." This indicates the manner in which its corruption began. Eve and Adam desired the forbidden fruit. They were deceived by the devil's lie that they should be as God, knowing good and evil. This deceitful lust led them to transgress. And so "by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin. And so death passed upon all men in that all sinned."

It is most important to know that, since that day, this type of man has always presented the same essential features. Differences of race, of education, have produced surface changes of character. Philosophy and culture have wrought exterior refinements and mitigations of the original evil. Civilization has softened or concealed its barbarities. And yet, radically, this type of manhood remains unchanged. Wherever you find the descendants of the first man, under whatever skies or auspices, this description remains true, "Corrupt according to the lusts of deceit." If he is not found to be inflamed with sensual lusts, there is yet some vice of the mind; it may be some fine frenzy, or even noble desire, which, however widely or grandly it soars, still swings around self

as its centre. The fact of man's mortality is not more universal than this fact of depravity, of which it is the witness.

In the deepest view, then, this Adamic human nature is the old man of which this Scripture speaks.

And so the "new man" is the Christ nature, whose transforming energy is first manifest in the renewing of "the spirit of the mind," and, ultimately, in the refashioning of the body.

In an important sense, the new man antedates the old. For, in the thought of God, the perfect image of Himself, as it was to be realized in manhood, was the Man, Christ Jesus. Not Christ after the flesh, as is now the common misconception, but the Christ of the new creation. (2 Cor. v. 16, 17.) Adam was only a figure of Him who was to come. A marred and dying manhood could not be a suitable image of the eternal God. This was realized only in the risen Jesus. All previous processes in creation, and the first formation of an image of God in clay, were but preparatory to the production of this new and incorruptible manhood, the Perfect Image of Himself. He is, then, "the New Man." The first man is of the earth, earthy. *He* is the Lord from heaven. The first man is natural. The Second Man transcends the whole realm of nature. He came, indeed, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and so into

voluntary subjection to this present order. His temptation in the wilderness was essentially the devil's effort to induce Him to throw off this yoke, and assert His sovereignty over the resources and angelic powers and the kingdoms of this world-system before the time. To this lordship He was destined. But He was only to reach it through resurrection. He must first, through death, purge our manhood from sin and deliver it from the power of death. And therefore, in our flesh and blood, He went down into the depths of this conflict with Him that hath the power of death. The hour of His bodily dissolution was not only the crisis of human redemption. It was the grand trial whether man, as the embodied image of God, should reach the throne to which his Creator had from the beginning assigned him; whether he should triumph over the powers that had hitherto enslaved and destroyed him, and win immortality and sovereignty over this created system. And Jesus, Son of God and Son of man, was victorious. Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (Coloss. ii. 15.) Or again, as we read in the chapter preceding the text, "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth." We cannot comprehend

all these expressions signify. But they teach that Jesus assumed our natural manhood and came into conflict with all the elements and forces, or, in Scripture language, "the principalities and powers" of this natural system, in subjection to which man became corruptible and mortal; and that, in dying, He went down beneath their yoke in order that, in the power of His sinless and eternal life, He might break that yoke for Himself and for us, and bring up out of the realm of death a regenerated manhood, triumphant over them all. So that "the new man" is not an improved natural man, subservient still to the laws and forces of the natural system, which return him to the dust from whence he sprang. He is superior to the whole realm of nature. All things are his, whether the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come. And all things must be put forever beneath his feet.

Such is the origin and such the character and dignity of the new man, whom in so many and striking ways, the Scripture places in contrast to the old man, blighted by sin and going down to corruption. They are distinct creations.

We are now prepared to discover the deep meaning of the injunction of the text to put off the old man and put on the new. We see that the ultimate goal of this process is the death of the old, and our complete investiture with that

new and radiant manhood in which Christ was raised. We have already said that this involves no change in personality. We put off the one as an earthy tabernacle (2 Peter i. 14), and are "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." (2 Cor. v. 2.) And yet that which we put off or on, although not essential to our personality, is essential in our *manhood.* For man is not merely a spirit. A disembodied spirit would not be a man. Man is an *embodied* image of God, holding special place and title in His creation in virtue of his embodiment in it.

Our destiny, then, is to die with Christ out of the old creation and live again with Him in the new. And if any man be in Christ, the new creation is in him begun. (2 Cor. v. 17.) And therefore the process of the crucifixion of the flesh, with its affections and lusts, has begun. Our very calling, the first principle of our discipleship, is that we consent that the old man shall be crucified in us. The Christ nature is born in us to this end. And in the power of it we are daily to put off the old man, by mortifying its members, denying the lustful clamors of its flesh, and equally the proud ambitions and vain desires of its mind. Every Christian knows something of this process. These dissatisfactions with an earthly, sensual life, these struggles against sin and the low-born tendencies of an evil nature, these aspirations after God, and

purity, are the working in us of this Christ-life. But few Christians realize how deep is this process. Jesus leads us all, as He led the first disciples, by gentle stages, and as we are able to bear it, into the full meaning of this mystery of the cross.

And yet we must all needs learn this lesson. It is the only way of life, the only path of peace. The more thoroughly we consent to the death of the old man in us, the greater the scope and freedom for the manifestation of the life of the new man.

This passage also presses home upon us our responsibility in this process. Its accompanying verses specify minutely the sins to which the old man is given,—lasciviousness, uncleanness, lying, stealing, anger, bitterness, clamor, evil speaking, malice. It enumerates some of the manifest graces of the new man,—kindness, honesty, compassion, love, forgiveness, and, as comprehensive of them all, these characteristic features, "righteousness and true holiness." We are called to act in all purity of motive toward God and in righteous dealing toward man. Yea, more, as our fellow-men are burdened and cursed with a sinful nature common to us all, we must bear with their ignorance and folly, be helpful to their weakness, and compassionate in their misery, and so reflect, in our feeble way, upon them something of God's loving-kindness toward us.

But in order to any successful suppression of the uprisings of the old man in us, it is very important that we recognize that our true standing and life are now in Christ, the new man. In every Christian there is the twofold nature, that which is born of Adam and that which is born of God. The gospel of the grace of God to us is, that the believer on Christ enters into all the benefits of the judgment against our old nature to which He submitted on the cross. In God's view we there died in Him. We are risen with Him. We have new and eternal life in Him, and therefore we are transferred out of the old category of guilt and condemnation, forgiven, justified, sanctified in Christ. We are new men in Him. And with this new and triumphant manhood our personal being, in God's view, is forever identified. It is no longer "I" that does evil, but sin that dwelleth in me. (Rom. vii. 20.) The old man is henceforth but a dying kernel for the new. In God's economy it is necessary that it remain for a while, as a sort of calyx and shield, a place of germination and struggle and growth, of aspiration and of training, for the new man. In this view of it, it is not to be despised nor maltreated, as by the old ascetics. That which is natural is first, and afterwards that which is spiritual. It is to be hereafter rejected as chaff; but chaff is good in its place, and up to the time of the grain's maturity.

And yet we are ever to remember that the sentence of death has gone out against the old man, and that our calling now is to put this into practical execution, so far as he attempts, in any way, to regain supremacy over our conduct or opinions or motives. We may compel him to do us abject service in our endeavor to serve God, but we are always to keep him under as a servant. Never must he appear as master.

And this suggests to us that we need specially to guard against the uprisings of the old man in the service of God. It is here that the devil is ever seeking to intrude him, in order that he may degrade our service, which can please God only as offered by the new man, down to the level of a fair shew in the flesh. In our worship this old nature is ever eager, like Nadab and Abihu, to seize the censer of our praise and prayers and offer them with strange fire before the Lord. Like Dathan and Abiram, it is ever on the alert to stir up rebellion against the rule of the Spirit, through the Lord's anointed servants, and to arrogate to itself their prerogatives. The old man is active in our churches, in our assemblies for worship, in our ecclesiastical councils. He puts on the guise of the new man; he is transformed into an angel of light, and in this character he comes by stealth into the church of God, and becomes the active manager of her affairs, her finances, her holy or-

dinances. He even raises his voice in her pulpits, and brings in his damnable heresies, beguiling unstable souls and drowning men in perdition.

It was these specious, diabolical, actings of the old man within the precincts of the church against which the New Testament epistles give special warning. Already she had begun to be corrupted in both doctrine and practice from this source. And hence the careful, solemn, reiterated teaching of Paul concerning the character of the old man, and the essential need in the Christian life and the life of the church that he be crucified. He must be tracked and exposed in every form in which he trails his footsteps within this hallowed sphere. Alas that the church in these days should heed so little these solemn warnings! How many Christians, having begun in the spirit, seek to make themselves perfect in the flesh. How many glory in appearance and not in heart. How many, forgetting that they have died with Christ out of this old life, come into subjection, as though they were living in it, to ordinances, such as touch not, taste not, handle not, as if such police restraints upon the old man could ever build up the life of the new. And how many come back into bondage to the traditions of men and the rudiments or elements of the world, as if there were any atmosphere here for the new man to breathe, going into associations of all sorts, in which these rudiments

are the accepted principles, and mistaking the nurture they afford for the old man for the culture of the new. The very last form of apostasy, the Antichrist himself, will be the old man, the man of nature, tricked off in the garniture of the new, assuming to be reverenced as such, sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself that he is God.

Now, our only guard against these multiform betrayals of the truth and these cunning counterfeits of the Christ, as they find entrance into the church, or overspread the world with their strong delusions, is to faithfully apply the truth of the text to our own lives. We must search ourselves, as with a lighted candle, to see what evil ways there be in us. Every man's heart is a microcosm of the world, and all the actings of human nature in the world around us are germinally there. And not only for our own safety and upbuilding into the life of Christ, but for the salvation of our fellow-men and their guidance into the way of life, we must detect and reject the dark, deceitful ways by which the old man, which God has adjudged to death, seeks to live again in the whole sphere of our lives, even in that which is spiritual, and by which he endeavors to dictate and strut and rule even in the church of God.

We have thus seen that the putting off the old man is a far deeper thing than merely correcting

its vices, and the putting on the new is a higher thing than improving the old. This new cloth cannot be patched on to the old. We need a new garment altogether. The mistake of multitudes is that they suppose salvation to consist in a mere pruning off the vices of the old man. The gospel of amendment and culture and philanthropic sentiment is now widely preached in lieu of the gospel of Christ. The rejection of the old man includes, indeed, the abandonment of its vices. But the vital feature in God's way of salvation is the consignment of the old man to death. It is never assumed that he can be radically changed or improved. Hence He saves by raising up in us the new man. We need to know how deep and radical is this salvation of which we are the subjects. We need to stand guard against that ever-present, ever-recurring and subtle error of the Wicked One, which affirms that what is natural must be right. This monstrous dogma of original sin, exclaims the radical, is a crime against nature and against manhood. "We have a right to indulge the propensities and desires which God Himself has given." Such fail to see that the meaning of this present world-system is, that it is made the training-ground for a new manhood, which alone is worthy to enter upon the possession and enjoyment of God's works, and that we rise into this rank of being through the denial and ultimate

death of the old nature. And the calling of the Christian, as he comes in contact with the evil of the world, and as he learns the true character and end of his dying manhood and the purity and glory of the new, in which he is to appear and inherit with Christ, is to mortify his members which are upon the earth, and to set his affections on things above. It is because of the scope and far-reaching issues of the redeeming work wrought for us in the death and resurrection of Christ, and which is now being wrought out in us, that we are urged to rid ourselves of all the deformities and vices of this dying manhood, which we must soon cast off, and to put on, by anticipation, the graces and virtues of that new manhood in the glory of which we shall appear. It is noteworthy how the several epistles, which set forth these deep things of God, end with the most practical and minute directions for the Christian's daily temper and conduct.

We may get from this subject new intelligence of the conflict to which we are now exposed. When the Spirit informs us, as in the next chapter, that we wrestle with principalities and powers, He describes that which necessarily results from the fact that we, as natural men, are quickened with that life which is now contending with these powers for the inheritance of the universe. And hence the conflict comes through every avenue

and tie that links us in with this created system. Moreover, we need to be warned against despondency, if our progress in this conflict be not one perpetual victory. Young Christians, especially, are apt to imagine, in the first flush of the new life, that it has vanquished forever all these enemies; whereas they have, at first, little idea of the scope and versatility of their power. The flesh is not slain in us at one stroke and once for all. The roots of its power lie deep. Their fibres run through the soil of this system of nature and hold us in bondage to it by cords which only death can fully sever, yea, rather, which only the Lord Jesus, descending from heaven with a shout, will finally and forever break.

We need also to be warned against looking for change and improvement in that which is born of the flesh. Our calling is not to improve the old man, but to put it off. We are not to expect any radical change in it for the better. It may be toned down and repressed. The new man may be so dominant that the old shall be abashed and weakened. We would put no limits to the extent to which it may be dethroned and mortified. The Christian may, and ought to, live in the Spirit. But, however obscured and mastered, its character is never changed. Nor is it extinct. It is ready to seize every opportunity for outbreak and rebellion. There are two irreconcilably hos-

tile natures in every Christian,—that which is born of the flesh and that which is born of the Spirit. The flesh cannot become spirit. It never can learn to love the things of God. It must gravitate to earthly things, for its tendencies are as unalterable as the laws of nature, to whose domain it belongs. But it can be disowned and put off. The temper and conduct of the new man may be put on, until they become the habit of the life. This is now our calling, as preparatory to our destiny. And He, who hath called us to it, is able to work in us mightily to this end, above all that we are able to ask or to think.

X.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE BODY.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.—ROMANS xii. 1.

THIS passage is often misquoted. The word "souls" is often coupled with the word "bodies." But this insertion weakens the force of the passage, which directly exhorts us to devote our *bodies* to God's service.

Even the similar passage in 1 Cor. vi. 20, "Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit," is corrected in the Revised Version. It reads simply, "Therefore glorify God in your body."

We shall now consider, first, what is the body; second, what place does it hold in the service we render to God; and, third, how may we offer through it such service as is here described, "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God."

At first sight it would seem to be a simple thing to define the body. And yet our common definitions are made from but a single point of view, and are therefore partial. The anatomist, the

scientist, has each his definition. And so has the undertaker. It is easy enough to define the body as we see it. It is that animal frame built up of bones and flesh and blood, with its parts knit together, its organs adjusted to their functions, and together forming the perfect figure and habitation of a man. The body is all we can see or handle of man. And yet of nothing are we more convinced than that the body is not the whole of us. There is something behind and distinct from the vital frame we inhabit.

Looking further into the constitution of these bodies of ours, we find that they are built up out of the materials of the world, the same gases and minerals that compose the earth, and that blaze in the fiery vapors of the sun and stars. We find that they are sustained and animated by the forces that operate in this realm of nature. And they are the depositories and batteries of these forces. Indeed, if we assume, as we have right to do, that the personality of man resides in the spirit, his body then appears to be that which gives him local habitation and name in this universe. It brings him into relation to this created system. It is his inlet of intelligence concerning it, the instrument by which he acts upon it, and compels its substances and forces to become subservient to his use.

Still more evident is it that it is our present

channel of intercourse and communication with the world of mankind, the mass of embodied human spirits around us. By means of these bodies we know and are known of one another. We come into relations of intercourse and sympathy with our fellow-men through the magnetic touch of sense with sense, the grasp of hand with hand.

It follows, then, that the place the body holds in the service we render to God is that of the indispensable instrument. Disembodied ghosts have no sphere of action in this present world.

But here the question arises, Does not the Bible teach that the body is essentially depraved, and therefore a most unworthy instrument for this service? The reply is that the term "body" in Scripture is not identical with the term "flesh." Flesh defines a nature, a certain inherent organic disposition of the substances and forces that enter into man's being toward sin, and by which both body and mind are enslaved. "The *mind* of the flesh is enmity against God." (Rom. viii. 7, R. V.) Man's whole nature, as built up out of the substances and forces of this present world, has come into bondage to corruption. And his body, of course, is the seat of this infection. And hence it must die. But the plan of God's salvation provides for the quickening of men with a new and heaven-born life from Christ. This new birth

is first in the region of the spirit, which henceforth begins to reduce the disordered elements of man's being to its sway. The directing spirit of man has lost its full and proper control over these forces that operate upon and through our bodies. Indeed, these forces are themselves in a present condition of ferment and rebellion. For we read that the whole creation is in bondage to corruption, and that the restoring reign of Christ requires that its principalities and powers be brought into such subjection to His sway, as shall put an end to this wreck of sin and death, both in the bodies of men and in the system of creation to which they stand related.

But, before the final refashioning and redemption of our bodies, we are left in this world to be trained for warfare and dominion. We have a regenerate spirit in bodies still unredeemed. Our schooling and trial now is to bring into control to the law of the spirit of life which we have in Christ Jesus the members of our bodies; to master these forces of which they are the depositories, and which are none other than the mighty forces that move through the realm of creation, and to subject them to the service of Christ. Our future exaltation with Him requires that, in this realm where we are now the born slaves of sin and death, we shall become masters. But before we rise to complete dominion with Him we are trained for

it by present tutelage and conflict. So that it enters into the very essence of our discipline that we should learn to keep our bodies under.

We have thus seen that these bodies are our present instruments of service to God, and that our calling now is to subject them to this service.

Like a pilot on a dangerous sea along a rocky coast, with here and there a lighthouse, and with the winds blowing in gusts from all quarters and the billows surging beneath, we are not only to guard the ship with its precious freight from wreck, but to catch and subsidize these riotous forces of wind and wave, to compel them to keep us afloat, to fill our sails and waft us safely home. These lawless elements that have so long made havoc of man's nature, subjecting it to the law of sin and death and strewing all these coasts of time with the stranded bodies of men and even with the wrecks of proud nations, these we are to subjugate and direct into a new channel, the service of God, the end of which is not death, but whose fruit is unto holiness and the end everlasting life.

We are now prepared to pass on to our third and more practical inquiry, How may we best make this living sacrifice, and make our bodies the ready and efficient instruments of this service?

First, we must recognize that our bodies now belong to God. We read that their redemption is

future. And yet they are now Christ's purchased possession. "For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." They are His, not only because He shall ransom them from the grave, but in that they are now the casket which enshrines the redeemed spirit, and through which alone the light of the life He has kindled in us can shine forth in this dark world. God's title in us extends, therefore, over the whole region of our physical life, so that through it all our spirits may act in obedience to His Spirit.

And hence we must also recognize that these bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost, "which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own." We have seen that our salvation essentially begins in the quickening of the spirit with new life from the ascended Christ. The great mystery, as well as the unspeakable blessing of the gospel, is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." That presence hallows and sanctifies these bodies. And not only so. It is a mighty, all-subduing power. We have had some glimpses of the wide extent of this command, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice," and of the potent forces to be overcome. But "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." "If God be for us, who then can be against us?" Or what mighty forces, ranging through the heights and depths of creation, can separate us from His love?

The essential element of success in this duty, then, is the recognition of our present relation to God, and of the mighty power by which He works for us, which was displayed in lifting Jesus, our brother man and captain of our salvation, up to headship over all the principalities and powers of creation, and which has, even now, quickened us together with Him, and stands pledged to raise us to the same glorious dominion. And although this dominion awaits us in the life to come, we are called in this life to an earnest and foretaste of it. These lawless forces, that oppress and hinder us through the body, may now be subdued to the reign of the Christ in us. Witness St. Paul, who declared that he kept his body under and brought it into subjection. The word here implies the severest mortification and self-restraint.

And this throws light upon the question of sanctification. We have no doubt that most Christians take far too low views of what the grace and power of God can accomplish in us, and that our poor success is but proof of our weak faith and imperfect consecration. And yet the Word of God does not warrant the thought that the complete surrender and control of all our life-powers, of which Paul speaks, can be reached by a single step. Such a view implies, we think, a previous short-sighted view of the depth of the self-sacrifice required, and of the far-reaching hostility of

these life-forces which are to be overcome and tranquillized, and subdued to the reign of Christ. It must never be forgotten, and this some excellent Christians overlook, that it enters now into the very marrow of our discipline in this life that the new man in Christ be shut up in a depraved and dying tabernacle, that our bodies can be brought into submission to the behests of the renewed spirit only by vigorous watchfulness and discipline, and that, even with the greatest care and restraint, there will be something of the clumsiness and taint of the earthy channel in all the ways by which the new life flows forth from us and seeks expression. One single act of self-consecration, however thorough and sincere, cannot do away with the necessity of life-long consecration and vigilance and progress in that mastery of self which shall enable us always to glorify God in our bodies, and to bind all their imperious and lustful appetites to the horns of His altar.

And this leads us to speak further of the care and culture of the body as a Christian duty. We have seen that there is a sacredness about it, in that the Holy Ghost has condescended to make it His temple and to employ it in His service. We should, therefore, study and observe the laws of health. The kingdom of God, indeed, is not meat and drink. It is not a system of dietetics. Nor does bodily exercise profit anything in establishing

our position in grace. This is His gift. And yet, called into His family and to His kingdom and glory, we have already seen that we cannot serve Him efficiently with bodies untrained, disordered, and rebellious. Nor is a sickly, shattered body the best kind of offering to lay upon His altar. We do not believe, indeed, that sound physical health is so important a factor in our usefulness as is often claimed in these days of muscular Christianity. For it may be only the vigor of the natural man, who receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, and to whom they are foolishness. Paul, we judge, had an insignificant bodily presence, and a painful thorn in the flesh. The power of God is often most conspicuous where infirmities abound. And yet Paul made the best use of all his physical powers. He did not suffer them to be weakened by laziness or self-indulgence. He performed prodigious labors with that frail body of his. And this because he was temperate or self-controlled in all things. There is a vast waste of physical power with most of us. Vital forces are exhausted by irritation and excitements, by excess of appetites and unregulated emotions and discontents, which the reign of God's peace in the soul would quell. And then there is a hurry and bustle and fussiness about much of our Christian service which drains our resources, and which would be saved if we were calmly

waiting upon God for opportunities and anxious to do only His will, without so much interference and compulsion to make things go to suit ourselves. This sacrifice of the body requires, therefore, that we take the best care of it; not coddling it into inactivity or petting it into feebleness or exhausting it by an impetuosity which is born of the flesh and not of the Spirit, but by observing the laws of its health, and by conserving its best powers for the best uses. And especially are we called to the bridling of its appetites. The heroes of faith, in all ages, have been men who curbed appetite. We have referred to Paul as an eminent example. The strong men of the early ages of Christianity were made so by self-denial, what we call asceticism. It is true that errors crept in to distort their notions of bodily restraint and to sway them from the simplicity of the gospel of God's grace. But still, their mastery of the body enabled them to be martyrs where we are but feeble witnesses. Paul was no ascetic in the technical sense. And yet he was in fastings often. And still is it true that no man can present his body as a living sacrifice to God who cannot control his eating and drinking, and so allows his spiritual nature to be clogged and dulled by indulgences at table which do not minister to his strength, but which simply gratify his palate and load up his stomach, the laboratory of the life-forces he must use in God's

service, with work it cannot properly perform. And so with every other carnal appetite and lust. Some of these are especially sins against the body, disqualifying it for the Master's use.

And the distempers, engendered in this lower region of man's nature by excess, stimulate also those vices of the mind which equally waste and disorder the life. Pride, envy, malice, covetousness, vain ambitions, these also irritate and unchain and unbalance and so dissipate the powers of the soul, which ought to be harmonized to the will of Christ and employed in His service.

And here we may speak a word of caution against that inertia into which we are apt to fall, and which especially defeats the whole idea of Christian service as a *living* sacrifice.

The constant tendency of man's physical nature is to gravitate into sloth and sluggishness and consequent enfeeblement of health. This tendency is resisted by activity. Hence the value of work as a means of grace.

We need to stand guard against and beat back that languor and debility which are the result of a want of proper employment of our life-powers, and especially in God's service. There is no elixir of life for the body like the presence in it of God's Spirit. This is His saving health. This is the joy of the Lord which is our strength. It is just at this point that Satan seeks to defeat the pur-

pose of our calling, by oppressing in us this new life from God which can vivify us in body as well as soul, and which certainly should overcome that heaviness which so clogs the spiritual life, and makes so many Christians dead lumber in the house of God where they ought to be "living stones."

And this leads us to speak further of the duty of standing guard at all the inlets and outlets of our life in the body against the invisible enemies of our salvation. Man's physical nature has long been a tramping-ground for these enemies. Satan and evil spirits enter into men now as truly as in the days of Judas and Ananias. The prince of the power of the air is still the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. (Ephes. ii. 2.) Our bodily appetites, our mental cravings and emotions, are all inlets at which these enemies may enter. Around all the weak points of the fortress the enemy prowls. We have seen that our conflict is essentially a fight for the prize of inheritance and dominion in this vast system of God's works. Our success involves the overthrow of the kingdom of darkness, and the advancement of a new race of kings and priests in embodied immortality on to the throne of power. It is a life-struggle, therefore, which provokes Satan to great rage, for his time is short. And God's word is forever settled in heaven that the seed of the woman shall

bruise the serpent's head. This offering of our bodies, then, upon God's altar enters into the very heart of that conflict against principalities and powers about which Paul writes, and during which he exhorts us so earnestly to stand fast, girt with the whole armor of God.

And let us never forget that, great as is this conflict, they that be for us are more than they that be against us. Jesus is our Forerunner in it all. In a body like ours, He offered unto the Father the sacrifice of a perfect human life. He, through fierce temptations, in which He agonized unto blood, subdued and held captive all these warring elements of which man's nature is the seat and bound them forever to His throne. And, through death, He gave the death-wound to him who hath power over them all. He rescued our nature, body and spirit, from his fatal dominion and raised it to the right hand of power in the heavens. And now He is the Friend and Brother, the sympathetic High-Priest to every man who desires a like deliverance and trusts Him for it.

And let no man imagine that because this is the path of restraint and self-denial, it may be of harsh discipline, that it is therefore a way of sorrow and gloom. Rough though this path may be, it opens out, even in this world, into new and glad regions of life. For it is the carnal mind

which is death. While to be spiritually-minded is even now life and peace. And beyond, this path opens out into regions of unclouded light, of everlasting dominion and fulness of joy.

XI.

PHYSICAL SALVATION.

Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.—Acts iv. 12.

Upon the day of Pentecost the apostles had been endowed with power from on high. They immediately began to testify to the fact that God had raised from the dead the crucified Jesus, and to press home upon the consciences of the Jewish leaders their guilt in putting Him to death, and their responsibility now to repent and to submit to the risen Messiah.

This bold testimony was confirmed by signs from God, one of the most notable of which was the healing of an impotent man, lame from his birth. In response to the word of life spoken by Peter, he received the touch of life from the risen Jesus and was healed.

Let us now inquire into the meaning and scope of that salvation of which this impotent man was the subject. The bodily condition of this man illustrates the spiritual condition of all men. He was lame from his birth. "Behold," says the

Psalmist, "I was conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity." Men are morally lame from their birth. And as to the spiritual side of their nature, Scripture pronounces them "dead in trespasses and sins." They are out of right relation to God. And as He is the source of all life and blessedness, the life of men, under these conditions, must be disordered and diseased. There must be spiritual imbecility and diseased mortal bodies. This man's malady was the result of sin; if not his own sin, then that of his ancestors, for the defect was congenital. And the healing which came to him was of both soul and body. He walked and leaped and praised God.

It is plain that many of the instances of spiritual blessing mentioned in the New Testament were accompanied by physical healing. The word of healing was sometimes, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Peter, before Cornelius, described the saving ministry of Jesus in this way, "He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." Paul, when about to heal an impotent man at Lystra, perceived that "he had faith to be saved." (Acts xiv. 9, R. V. margin.)

Without doubt the apostles regarded the risen Jesus, and presented Him to their hearers, as the source of a new life-power to men, a regenerating, healing power, reaching not only to the springs of spiritual but of physical life. And for aught we

know, these springs are one fountain and not separate. We are accustomed to regard the physical effects of salvation, as seen in this case, as merely the signs or proofs of a supernatural spiritual healing. But they are more than simply signs; they are also effects. Such a view as this gives a far truer idea of our necessity as needing salvation, and of how fully our need has been met. We say a man needs to be saved. What does this mean? Is it merely that he is in danger of future punishment, or that his moral condition is such as to unfit him for future happiness? It means this indeed, but more also. It means that the very sources of life in the man have been impaired and defiled. Hence its development has been away from God and out of harmony with His eternal laws. "All sin is lawlessness" writes St. James. And hence there is disorder and excess and irritation, and sometimes frenzy, among our life-forces. There are spiritual vices, such as pride and selfishness and envy. And there are disordered physical cravings, carnal lusts that war against both soul and body. So that diseases and bad tempers and derangements in the body are just as truly the fruit of sin as vices of the mind. They are alike the result of a disordered life. Something is wrong in the vital constitution of man, in his original life-endowment. And therefore no remedy can reach the case short of a new

endowment. When the apostles spoke to men of Jesus as the Prince of life, whom God had raised from the dead, they meant to declare that God had now opened a new fountain of life and healing for mankind; one that was to affect us not only by spiritual impressions upon the mind, but as a new stream of life, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, through the whole region of our lives. Hence it was inevitable that this new life-power should demonstrate its energy in the region of the body also. Such bodily healing as that of this impotent man was a more powerful result than that ordinarily witnessed. And yet it differed in degree and not in kind from the blessings in which all believers shared.

All this is more apparent when we consider further that bodily disorders are uniformly viewed in the New Testament as manifestations of "the power of the enemy."* We are but little aware how deep and wide-spread is that malign power which God, for the wise ends of our training for the dignities of an eternal life, has suffered Satan to usurp in this created system. And hence we know little of the far-reaching range of that conflict in which we are now engaged with the ruler of this world's darkness. The lines of this warfare reach down to the foundations of our physical as

* See page 89.

well as our moral nature. And therefore the salvation which meets the case is constantly spoken of as a work of "new creation."

The practical end of this discussion is to urge upon the attention of Christians an aspect of Christ's saving work which is often overlooked. We seem to think that God's "saving health" is for the region of the soul, but that He can or will do nothing for us in the region of the body. But we are bold to say that any salvation which does not make itself felt in the region of the body, as well as of the spirit, can never meet our case. The fetters that bind men to sin are no less physical than moral. The law of sin which is in our members is in the members of the body. I look over any Christian congregation and ask myself, What are the hindrances to the spiritual life in these persons? I may be told that some are absorbed in money-making, others in the pleasures of life, and, in general terms, that they are too much taken up with the things of the world. All true, so far as it goes. But the story is not all told. I find that some are the slaves of bodily appetite, and others are clogged and weighed down with some form of physical infirmity. With some, dyspepsia or a torpid liver beclouds their sky and keeps them spiritless and gloomy. Others have disorder of nerves. Some are vexed with an irascible temper. A large proportion of sol-

diers in the Christian army are thus in hospital, or otherwise *hors du combat*, disabled for warfare or work by some kind of infirmity; it may be one that is constitutional or hereditary. But, because the maladies which disable them are physical, they regard themselves as excused. They deem it inevitable that they must succumb. They are thus defeated by the enemy, and know not that he has overcome them, because he has assailed them along the channels of the body, and with physical weapons. They never imagine that he can have anything to do with the liver or the nerves.

And yet the fact is that it is through these very avenues of the body he finds entrance. In these very ways he entangles and imprisons and impoverishes the spiritual life. Sin, be it remembered, is the disorder of the life. It disorganizes and degrades life in all its functions. Its effects, therefore, are as truly apparent in the body as in the mind. And new life from the Spirit of God must give energy and buoyancy through the whole region of man's life. How, otherwise, can we present our bodies unto God as living sacrifices, and our members as instruments of righteousness to bring forth fruit unto Him? The truth is, unless the Holy Spirit bless me with His healing, invigorating power in this region, as well as in spirit, then my case is only half met. It is among the life-forces of which my body is the home and

the organ that sin has bred anarchy, and they must be subdued to His sway, if I am to be of use in His service. In the case of an inebriate, for example, his shattered and debased life-powers must be subdued and tranquillized and reorganized around a new centre.

Now this is precisely the salvation given us in Christ. He is the new Lord of life. We get a new spirit of life from Him, a new life endowment, stronger than the old life of sin, and able to subdue all the faculties and functions of our being to itself. "He forgiveth all our sins and healeth all our diseases."

We are to recognize, indeed, that the complete redemption of the body will be effected only through its resurrection from the dead. Its final triumph over infirmities and disease will come only through its final triumph over death. And yet we have now the first fruits and earnest of that triumph. This miracle of healing was such an earnest. And so, also, was the increased buoyancy and gladness which characterized the first converts to Christianity, and of which there are many illustrations in our own times. In the Corinthian church, where there were many who were weak and sickly, this state of things is spoken of as a mark of God's disfavor, a chastisement for their sins at the Lord's table. This implies that weakness and sickliness are evils which it was

expected that the presence of the Holy Spirit in a man would overcome. I do not say prevent or always remove, but *overcome.* Paul seems to have been much tried with physical infirmities. He had a serious one, a thorn in the flesh. But he was not overborne by them. He did not suffer them to tie his hands or to put him to bed. The power of Christ in him triumphed over all invalidity or weariness or pain, and nerved him to an endurance of labor and fatigue and hardship such as to make his life a marvel of the ages.

This is what we mean when we say that the salvation of Christ is meant to bless the whole man. It is a thing of broader scope than most of us imagine. On this account we should at least give a candid hearing, if not credence, to those instances of bodily healing in answer to prayer, of which well-attested reports come to us. We cannot, with the New Testament before us, deny that such things are included in the scope of that salvation which Jesus has brought to men. Its power must extend over all the ills of life, either to remove them or to enable us to triumph in and over them. We ought to be no more willing to be enslaved by these than by vicious habits. I do not say that it is promised that we shall escape them. They are now a part of the appointed tribulation through which we must enter into the kingdom of God, inasmuch as they enter vitally

into our conflict with the prince of this world.* But it is promised that they shall not capture us, nor sink us down into inertia and despondency. "For God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

The view that we have taken of salvation, therefore, is that it is the renewal of man's life, now blighted and disordered by sin, and that its effects must be apparent in the whole region of that life, body, soul, and spirit. Even our mortal bodies are quickened or vivified by the Spirit that dwelleth in us.

Such being the nature of that salvation which man needs, it follows that only divine power can effect it. This alone can reach the seat of life and renew it at its sources. This alone can bind and cast out its enemies. And therefore we are prepared for the announcement of the text, that there is salvation in no other name than the name of Jesus. The meaning of that name is "Jehovah will save." That is the mystery of Christ's person. He is Emmanuel, God with us. In a mysterious way God, in Him, has taken hold of our nature. He became our brother-man, bore our sicknesses, was tempted with all our infirmities, subjected Himself to death, and so was made in all things like unto His brethren. All the hidden

* See page 98.

workings of the life-forces that operate in us have been explored and experienced by Him. He measured the lowest deep of our need. And through this whole region He passed a conqueror. In dying, He won the victory over death. And, in resurrection, He exalted our nature, redeemed, purified, immortalized to the right hand of God. And so He has become the Fountain-head of a redeemed humanity, of a new and eternal life for men. And He is the only source, the only name in heaven or on earth by which we must be saved. We have but one Captain in this matter, the only One who has fought this fight and won this crown and received these gifts for men. And His is a mighty name. We have been taking low and limited views of it. We have thought of its power as restricted to only one region of our diseased life, not daring to believe that it could guard the whole vulnerable region of the life of the body, not discerning that it is utterly impossible for Him to protect us in one region unless He guard us also in the other. What capable commander would leave one-half of his line of battle, and that the most vulnerable half, undefended? Surely this is no just conception of that power which worketh in us, and which is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we are able to ask or to think.

We have not claimed in this discourse that we are to expect Him to work in us such constant

miracle as that we shall never get sick or weary or feel the burden of the manifold infirmities that flesh is heir to. Paul was not exempt from these. Jesus bore them all. But we have claimed, and ought to claim, that He who triumphed over them all, and who now works in us mightily, or would so work if we would trust Him and obey Him, is able to give us the same victory, so that they shall not prove hindrances to our spiritual life and peace and fruitful service, but even helps, occasions, as in Paul's case, for the more manifest display of His grace and power.

XII.

WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE?

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.—TITUS i. 2.

WE propose to institute an inquiry into the nature of the blessing here promised. The most frequent and definite statement of the boon held out to men in the gospel by Jesus, and afterwards by His apostles, is in this phrase, "eternal life."

The word "everlasting life" occurs but once in the Old Testament (Daniel xii. 2), where it is connected with the promised resurrection of some of them that sleep in the dust of the earth. It occurs in the New Testament nearly fifty times, and many more times by implication. We are safe in calling it the distinctive promise of the gospel. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

What is the nature of this promise? Specially we would inquire, Is the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ a perpetuation of this present gift of life, or is it a gift of a higher order?

It would be presumptuous in any man to attempt to tell what life is. Science has been pursuing the secret with microscope and scalpel, and tracing its footsteps backward along the ages. And yet she cannot cross the border-line of this mystery. All we know is, that it is from God, the Fountain of all life. Science and Scripture unite in affirming that it is closely connected with this system of creation. Some scientific philosophers seek to convince us that this system furnishes from within itself the substratum and the potency of every form of life. And yet confessedly they have never penetrated to the origin of life. Their conjectures, therefore, are worth nothing alongside of the Bible declaration that "the Father hath life in Himself," and that from Him all things live. But He has made nature to be the soil upon which life grows and is nurtured. It is the arena upon which it performs its functions and puts forth its energies. It is the domain it seeks to subsidize for its uses and fully possess.

And hence we observe that all life in this system of nature seeks embodiment. A body is necessary in order to bring created life into connection with and dominion over God's works. Our bodies are centres of the forces that play through this created system; batteries by means of which they are stored up for our use. I am persuaded that in our prevalent conceptions of the

gift of life we depreciate embodiment. We infer, from Scripture, that it is the only form of created life that can possess and enjoy our Father's vast estate. Hence the importance of that cardinal doctrine of the New Testament, the Resurrection. Even He, in whom creation was headed up from the beginning, became embodied. And in Him the fulness of the Godhead now dwells bodily. Evil spirits appear to be the outcasts from this system. Hence Scripture gives no instance of the appearance of embodied evil spirits, except as they steal into and possess themselves of other persons' bodies. They even prefer swine to being disembodied. On the other hand, in all the instances in which good beings from the unseen world appear to men, there was a visible form.

Looking now at the teachings of science and of revelation concerning the progress of creation, we find that, from the beginning, the Creator has been preparing it to be the domain of embodied life. We find an ascending series of created forms, from plants and creeping things, until the whole is headed up in man, made in the image of God. The account in Genesis is not inconsistent with, and is, perhaps, best explained by the supposition that there was a lower form of human life on the earth before Adam. We are not precluded even from supposing that man, as to his animal nature, is an evolution from the lower forms of life. But

Adam was the first creation of man with a *spiritual* nature, capable of knowing God and of immortality through union in life with Him.

Adam was a grand step upward in the ascending series of life. But our present inquiry is, Has the Creator taken the last step in this advance of life on to the platform of His works? We reply, No. Adam was an earthy man, made capable of eternal life. But he lost this great boon by disobedience. Indeed, it was never intended that he should attain and hold it for himself and his posterity. The casket of his manhood was too frail for such a treasure, his hand too weak for such a sceptre. It was in the mind of God from the beginning of creation to produce on its platform a divine man, immortal in his own nature, as the completed image of Himself, and worthy to wear, as His representative, the crown of this created system. The first man was but a mortal, corruptible image of the invisible God, a perishable model in clay of the noble image in the mind of the Divine Artist, which was to hereafter stand on the summit of creation and wear its crown.

The incarnation, therefore, was another step in the ascending series of creation, the birth into it of a heavenly man. But not the final step, as is assumed in much of the Christian thinking of the day. Its highest exponents, as, for example, Joseph Cook, do not avoid this error of making

the incarnation the climax of creation. It can be shown that this is a subtle point of departure from the faith once delivered to the saints. The resurrection of Jesus in the form of glorified manhood; *that* was the culmination of all God's wondrous working in creation along the ages. To stop short of this, to view the incarnation otherwise than as in order to the resurrection, is only to know Christ Jesus after the flesh, whereas we are henceforth to know Him in this character no more.* It is to forget that if any man be in Christ he is a new creation. The newly created immortal man, the perfect image of the invisible God, was brought to view when Jesus rose from the dead. The ideal manhood which had been the primeval thought of God and the goal of His creative energy was then realized. Before this signal triumph Jesus was in the likeness of sinful flesh. Our flesh and blood, even in Him, could not inherit the kingdom of God. Hence His body was newly created in that fashion of glory in which, as the risen man, He is now seated at the right hand of power.

At the resurrection of Jesus, then, we have the introduction of the new and final form of embodied life, the divine manhood. And this is the grand, the culminating revelation of the Word

* 2 Cor. v. 16.

of God, the mystery which in other ages was not made known, and before the splendors of which the light which shines from all heathen systems of religion or of human philosophy or from the highest watch-towers of modern science pales, as does a rush-light before the sun.

If we were to ask science whether the highest form of created life has yet appeared upon the earth, she cannot tell us. She leads us up through all lower stages of life to the earthy man and exclaims *Ecce homo!* Behold the man for whom the earth has been so long preparing! But she knows nothing of the coming man. She teaches no doctrine of resurrection from the dead.

But this Word tells us of a new order of humanity. The Head and Type of it has already been here. He was made flesh and dwelt among us. But through death He passed beyond this mortal sphere out into immortal manhood. And all heaven uttered another *Ecce Homo*, Behold the man, the final result of God's wondrous working along the ages, the consummate product of His wisdom, power, and love, worthy to wear the crown of all created things, and to possess all power in heaven and on earth. When Paul, then, speaks, as he does in this salutation to Titus, of the hope of eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began, he is speaking definitely of that new order of life which is embodied in

the new man, Christ Jesus. This is now God's gift to us through Him. It is not a mere perpetuation of the order of life and manhood in which we were first created in Adam. It is a new endowment to which we are born again in Christ, and in virtue of which we become sons of God of a new order, a new and higher rank in creation. To this new manhood there pertains that life which is superior to all the forces and substances of the universe. Life, as we see it in these perishable forms, has power to subsidize the elements of nature for its support and to direct its forces for its own ends. But this it does now, not by inherent right, but in the way of warfare and subjugation, and in this struggle its powers ultimately break down. But eternal life must bend all things in heaven and earth to its behest. It must be superior to all principalities and powers. All substances must wait upon its needs and all forces become tributary to its aims. The harvest, therefore, for which God has long been ploughing and tilling these fields of creation is not yet complete. A new order of being is to be produced, invested with eternal life. Christ is the first fruits in the new order. But we, also, are "a kind of first fruits."

We are told that the whole creation is groaning and waiting for the manifestation of these sons of God. They are its destined lords, and also its

deliverers. They are that anointed race who are to subdue all its wide realms to the will of God and make them vocal with His praise. And they cannot be fitted for this high office except as they rise in eternal life triumphant over all the forces and powers that prevail in this system. Man in flesh and blood is not worthy or capable of this dignity. But God, before the foundation of the world, provided for the redemption and reinvestment of man for this high office in the power of an endless life. And this, as we have seen, implies corporeity. Eternal life for man requires his new creation in body as well as spirit.

In this way alone can he become a perfect image of God and a fit vessel for His eternal praise.

XIII.

THE EVERLASTING FIRE.

Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—MATTHEW XXV. 41.

THERE has been much division of opinion as to the proper interpretation of the judgment scene here described.

Without stating fully the grounds of our conclusions, we infer:

1. That this chapter describes a judgment of the *living* nations of mankind by the Son of man. This, however, does not exclude the thought that His work of judgment comprehends also the generations of the dead. But here is portrayed the period of crisis and culmination in His work of judgment, so far as the earth is the arena of it. Other Scriptures, as, for example, Rev. xx., teach that it must ultimately extend itself through all the regions of the dead until even death and hell are cast into the lake of fire.

2. The standard of judgment is the disposition of men's hearts toward the Christ, as evinced in their treatment of His brethren.

3. The agent of the divine punishment is the "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

After all the centuries of devout study of the Scriptures concerning the future destiny of wicked men, the church has failed to reach substantial unity of doctrine. There is essential agreement indeed in the received symbols of the orthodox churches. But there are wide differences in the public interpretations of these symbols, and still wider differences in private opinion. In these days religious teachers of every class feel called upon in some way to soften or to remove the harsher features of the doctrine. Very few now believe in the hell of medieval times. Some have taken refuge in the theory of conditional immortality. They believe that the wicked will be eternally destroyed. Others find relief in the hope of a second probation. Many believe in final restitution. While, within the lines of those denominations, whose creeds debar their adherents from such relief, many seek to preserve their consistency and their regard for what they believe to be the teachings of Scripture, by remanding all its descriptions of future punishment to the realm of figures. And so they reduce the terrors of hell down to the pangs of remorse, and its fires of vengeance to the sufferings which, in the course of nature, are always consequent upon sin.

In thus seeking relief from the doctrine of hell-fire, as formulated by the old Roman church, and wielded by her with such terrible force, the Christian mind is but obeying a proper instinct. In the larger liberty in which it now moves, it is compelled to seek a doctrine more in accord with its larger and better idea of God.

And yet it may well be doubted whether a reverent submission to His Word will allow us to consign all its dark sayings to the realm of symbols, because we cannot otherwise explain them. Rather should we wait for that larger understanding which will enable us to see their place and meaning in that deep plan of God which He is now unfolding in creation and redemption.

We desire, therefore, to inquire into the meaning and significance of the terms under which the Bible constantly sets forth its doctrine of future punishment.

The most emphatic and comprehensive of all the terms which describe this punishment is "eternal fire." It is surprising how often in both the Old Testament and the New "fire" is spoken of as an agent of the divine wrath against sin. Both in the imagery and in the sober statements of the Old Testament we are taught that "a fire goeth before Him and burneth up His enemies round about." In notable acts of judgment fire was the destructive agent. Sodom and Gomorrah were

destroyed by it. And twice in the New Testament are we told that their destruction was an ensample of that which shall hereafter overtake the ungodly. They suffered "the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude 7.) Nadab and Abihu were consumed by fire because of their rash ministration. The companies of fifty sent out to capture Elijah were destroyed by fire from God out of heaven. (2 Kings i.)

We are not to overlook, however, the fact that other and slower agents of destruction are also spoken of as "fire." Moses (Deut. ix. 3) declares that Jehovah would go before Israel to drive out their enemies as a consuming fire. Again, he warns Israel that, if they should forsake the Lord, He would be to them a consuming fire. (Deut. iv. 24.) Slower destructive agents, such as disease and famine and war, by which men and nations are consigned to death, are also viewed as the burning of His anger against them. Fire is the most rapid consumer of created forms and of human lives. But other agents consume them also. And therefore all destructive forces, by which men's lives are broken down and dissolved and creature forms are decomposed, may well be grouped under this one expressive term "fire." In the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 22), we find all these destroying agents, by which Israel was to be wasted, grouped together with that fire of hell which shall some

day burn down to the foundations of this present order of nature and transform it. The whole wide sweep of God's judgments is viewed as all of one class, and proceeding upon the same great principles. Whether the fire kindled in His anger burns against His people for their sins, or burns up the fetters which hold creation in bondage to corruption, it is but one judgment process.

The Old Testament teaching, therefore, while it broadens the use of the term "fire" so as to include in it all minor consumptive agents, by no means discards literal fire as one and a chief agent in God's judgments.

When we turn to the New Testament we find there still less warrant for excluding the literal idea from all its presentations of future judgment. Indeed, in one notable passage (2 Peter iii.), we are just as plainly taught that fire is to be invoked at the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men as that water was employed at the flood. "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are reserved unto fire." When Jesus, therefore, speaks, as He so often does, of "the fire that cannot be quenched," "the everlasting fire," it may be an easy way for us to evade the force of His words by including them under the vague category of figurative teaching. But what is our warrant for

this? Is there, then, no everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels? Or, turning over to the words of His apostles, we find them also constantly speaking of "a day of fire." Paul writes that the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with the angels of His might in flaming fire. (2 Thess. i. 8.) And in the visions of John the sunset days of this present world are lurid with judgment fires. The same principle of interpretation, by which we found in the Old Testament other agencies of trial and purgation, of sorting and sifting, and of destruction, included under this general term, applies here also. Christians are forewarned of the "fiery trial" by which they must be tried. But because some divine judgments, of which the process is slow, are thus spoken of, are we therefore warranted in emptying this term "everlasting fire" of all literal meaning? Surely we are not. The whole drift of Scripture teaching, and the passage already referred to from St. Peter, plainly forbid it.

Whatever relief, therefore, there is for us from the oppressive darkness of this subject, it cannot be obtained by a flippant concealment, behind a veil of symbolism, of the true meaning of the terms which set it forth.

We conclude, then, that under the term "fire" there seems to be included all those agents of divine judgment, of which fire is the chief, by

which creature forms and human lives are destroyed. There is a slow fire of God's anger burning against men all the time in the diseases and calamities and vices that consume them. But there are conspicuous acts of judgment impending in the future, when the powers of nature, as the angels of His judgment, shall intensify their work, and when fire shall especially be invoked, not only against ungodly men, but against the cosmical system, under the nurture of which the evil in them has been fostered. For creation, with the creature, is in bondage to corruption.

And this leads us to consider the force of the adjective "eternal," which Scripture so often associates with "fire." Without entering into the discussion of the question as to whether this term implies a limitless, or an age-long duration, we cannot overlook the fact that the word refers to the character as well as to the duration of that which it describes. There is a fire which characterizes this present "age," or economy of God's working in creation. Science affirms that the existing universe has been born out of fire. And fire is now its predominant feature. Every star that sparkles in the midnight sky, except the few planets near us, is a globe of fire. And these incandescent orbs seem to have been concentrated out of a luminous fiery mist that filled the vast spaces of the universe. The planets are probably

formed out of detached masses from the central suns, slowly cooled down by radiation, and through the absorption of their heat, rendered latent by chemical combinations among their elements. And thus the eternal cosmical fire is stored up in the substances of nature, and in all the forms which created life takes on. These are all born out of the womb of this æonian fire. And in the whirl of nature's forces they are all carried back again into the abyss from which they sprang. Their elements are dissolved, sometimes with slow, sometimes with rapid combustion. So that there is an eternal contest in the universe between the life which, proceeding from God, pervades it and the eternal fire. The life has been capturing and subsidizing the elements in creation toward the ends of its manifestation. And the eternal fire has been claiming back these elements wrested from it, and resolving them again into chaos and emptiness. But life again reclaims them, and has been advancing with triumphant steps along the ages, taking on higher and higher forms, until at last man was produced, the image of the Creator, and formed to be the receptacle of His immortal life. And yet the man of the earth, the Adamic man, is but a temporary and provisional vessel for this treasure. He is subject to death. His earthy form, like that of the animal races below him, consumes under the slow gnaw-

ing of the eternal fire. Hence the final perfected man must be raised out of this universal grave, in incorruption. The life that was in Jesus triumphed over all the destructive forces of creation, the devil and his angels,* and so He redeemed the man nature and invested it with His eternal life. And so, at last, there was produced, in Him, the incorruptible man, superior to all the forces of the universe, the perfected image of the invisible God, radiant with His life, the representative of His authority, and the Lord alike of all the realms of life, and of death and Hell. And in the power of His resurrection, as we are expressly taught (1 Cor. xv. 21–23), shall all the generations of men who have gone down to death be successively recovered from its grasp.

We begin thus to discover what is "the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." It is the eternal cosmic fire of the universe which, like a great dragon, has ever been devouring the creatures born out of its depths. Down into the darkness of this dissolution, this sheol or hell, have gone the generations of mankind. At the judgments which shall attend the Lord's coming, we are told that these destructive forces shall be in more intense operation. But the character of

* See remarks concerning "the prince of this world," page 85.

their work will be the same,—the work of death. As we have seen, literal fire will be an active agent in these judgment processes. It is probable that there will be new and unlooked-for irruptions of that fiery energy of which the earth and all nature is a magazine. As to the totality and the simultaneousness of these judgment fires much might be said. Suffice it here to say that Scripture teaches that both the earth and the human race survive them. We are interested now, however, in establishing the truth that the eternal fire, which is the agent of this destruction, is the same as that which has ever been devouring all material forms. The decay and death of these bodily frames is but the slow gnawing of the tooth of this eternal fire. And therefore we affirm that the underlying thought in all the Scripture phrases which describe it, such as "hell-fire," "the fire that cannot be quenched," etc., is this of remorseless destruction. The fact that the fire cannot be quenched emphasizes this thought that its work cannot be arrested. When John the Baptist declares that the Messiah shall thoroughly purge His floor and *burn up* the chaff with unquenchable fire,* no thought is farther from his mind than the endless preservation of the chaff in the fire. And so when Jesus warns us to fear one who is able to destroy both body

* Matt. iii. 12.

and soul in hell, we have no warrant for assuming that both will be preserved there for an endless combustion.

The punishment, then, that is held before the sinner in the Bible is that he must become a trophy and a prey to those destructive forces, powers of darkness, of whom the devil is the chief, who are themselves to be finally buried in this grave of fire, and who have been especially active and eager to drag down man into this abyss, because for man there has been provided that triumphant life which cannot be held captive in their domain, and to the chariot-wheels of whose progress they must be bound with everlasting chains.

We arrive, then, at this point in the solution of this mystery. The punishment of sin is to suffer destruction in this abyss of creation's fire; the dissolution of the elements out of which we have been built up into this highest form of created life. It is to sink back out of this realm of life and light into utter darkness and chaos. Whether this destruction involves the extinction of the spiritual part of man's being, or whether it precludes any possible recovery, are points about which we shall speak hereafter. But there is one point to which, in passing, we would direct attention, and that is that the law of God's judgments is universal. Not even Christians are a favored class. "*Our* God is a consuming fire." St. Paul

also writes (1 Cor. iii. 13–15) that their works, if evil, must be burned up, and they themselves saved with the suffering of loss and "so as by fire." And here we may discover the meaning of that baptism of fire which the Messiah was to accomplish in connection with the baptism of the Holy Ghost. His Spirit introduces into us all a cleansing fire of self-judgment. We first accept, as just, the sentence of death against our old nature, which sentence requires that the earthy man shall go down to death and see corruption. And we proceed to execute this sentence against its evils. "The spirit of judgment and of burning" thus consumes away the evil of our Adam nature and finally consigns it to the grave. We thus anticipate the just judgment of God which has gone out against all flesh. We consent that it shall be given over to the fire. We are not saved by a rescue of the old man from this pit of hell. We are saved by the creation in us of a new man which cannot sin and cannot die. And so out of this baptism of fire we rise into the life of God. Unbelievers, who do not submit to this self-judgment, must meet judgment in its more terrible forms in the future. But there is one law alike for all. God is no respecter of persons. If we do not judge ourselves we must hereafter be judged with the world. (1 Cor. xi. 32.)

What, then, survives the everlasting fire? We

have seen that the life which is beyond its reach is that which is now deposited in Jesus Christ. Out from all bondage to those cosmical forces which claimed man's nature for destruction, and which are the agents of the divine judgments against it, above the raging of their dissolving fires, He arose triumphant. (Coloss. ii. 15.) And the man nature was exalted in Him to that pinnacle of glory to which it was, from the beginning, appointed. He came, as Son of man, into the heritage of all things. And our lives are redeemed from destruction as, in the way of faith, they become linked in with His eternal life.

We are led, then, to conclude that the "everlasting fire" is not a fire of endless torment, but one of inevitable destruction. And this accords with the fact, patent on the face of Scripture, that every passage which alludes to future punishment carries with it, in some form, the idea of destruction. The very alternative of the gospel is "perish" or "have everlasting life." Men out of Christ must sink down into this hell. Those who are "in Him" must rise and reign in life eternal.

One passage indeed seems to be an exception to this uniform teaching. In Rev. xiv. 10, 11, it is stated that a certain class of sinners shall suffer a special torment, the smoke of which ascendeth up unto the ages of the ages. Upon this passage the

doctrine of an endless torment in hell mainly rests. But, not to speak of the inconsistency of this revolting conception of God with St. John's definition of Him as love, we submit that one or two such passages in the most obscure book of the Bible cannot set aside the multitude of plainer passages which represent the punishment of the wicked as "destruction." Unless we can certainly affirm what person or system is spoken of as "the beast and his image," and what the special sin involved in the worship of them, we are not prepared to dogmatize upon this passage. In a parallel passage in Isaiah xxxiv., we read that the smoke of the fiery judgment which the Lord should send upon Idumea "shall go up forever." And yet the promise, through the same prophet, is, that the whole earth shall be renewed.

If, however, the punishment of sin be this everlasting destruction in that gulf of fire, out of which all created forms were first evolved, if the eternal fire must thus claim back its own, is it the master of the universe? Shall it forever triumph over life, and will the devil remain the victor in this drama of ages? We have already observed how life has been advancing its conquests along the ages and over the whole field of creation. But its triumph was not signal and final until the risen Man burst the bands of death and spoiled the principalities and powers of its whole realm.

Henceforth life, in Him, abides, the Master of this created system, the subjugator of all its hostile powers. He must put down all rule and authority and power. All enemies must be trampled beneath His feet. And even the last enemy, which is death, shall be destroyed. The devil and his angels, death and hell, all must be cast into the lake of fire. The eternal cosmic fire must prove the final grave of all that is hostile to the reign of life in the universe. The whole creation must be redeemed, renewed, purified. The former things must pass away, and all things be made new.

Such is the sublime mission of that triumphant Lord of life, the Second Man, whom God has now crowned as King over His wide dominions. And He is the Head of an anointed race, to whom He has given power to become the sons of God, and whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren. He is bringing them to the same glory. And in them we see the high destiny to which, from the foundation of the world, manhood has been assigned in this universe of God.

XIV.

DESTRUCTION *QUÂ HOMO:*

A NEW THOUGHT ABOUT FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

We are now prepared to advance a step farther in the attempt to explore the mystery of future punishment. We have found that it is at least probable that the fearful words which describe this punishment refer to the devouring energy of those destructive cosmic forces, of which fire is the chief, by which creature forms are broken down, disintegrated, and dissolved, and human lives are consumed. We now propose to inquire whether this penalty of sin involves the utter extinction of man's being, or his destruction out of manhood.

There are three principal forms of belief concerning the destiny of the wicked :

1. Restorationism, or the doctrine that all men, after adequate punishment, will obtain eternal life and happiness.

2. The doctrine of conditional immortality, which affirms that wicked men, failing of eternal life, will be eternally destroyed.

3. The doctrine of eternal conscious misery, an endless torment.

All of these theories quote the Scriptures abundantly in their support, and insist that the passages which seem to favor the other views shall be subordinated to their own proof texts. There must be somewhere a doctrine upon this subject which shall not rest upon isolated texts, but upon the broad foundation of the whole Bible.

Without presuming to announce such a complete doctrine, we think that the discussion of the previous pages has prepared us to point out the direction in which it may be found. We have, in this volume, insisted upon the important place which manhood holds in the system of creation, and in the unfolding plans of its Author. We have glanced at the destructive forces against which manhood must contend to win this place; and at the effects of sin in bringing man into bondage to these evil powers, and in thus preventing him from reaching this high goal. The punishment of sin, therefore, must be that the sinner falls as a victim to this destructive opposition. He fails to reach the true end of his being. He is consigned by the Judge, who is also the *standard* of admission to the high dignities of manhood, to the wrathful energy of these forces, of which the everlasting cosmic fire is the representative and the chief, which make havoc of his

embodied being and destroy him, not utterly, but out of the line of completed manhood.

Two things come out clearly upon any full investigation of Scripture:

1. All its representations of future punishment involve the idea of the sinner's death or destruction of being in *some* form. Every passage, excepting one or two referred to on page 178, conveys this meaning. Even its pictures of hell-fire, rightly viewed, are not intended to convey the thought of unending torment, but to emphasize this thought of consumption of being as the sinner's doom. All destructive forces in the universe contribute to this result. The law of nature is the law of God. And no created life can survive the operation of this law, except it be linked in, through Christ, with the life of God.

2. This extinction of man's being cannot be absolute and final. For it is plainly revealed that all the dead shall be raised, the just and the unjust. Such an issue, moreover, would leave Satan master of the field, as concerns that large portion of the race blotted out of existence.

These variant Scriptures are harmonized by supposing that the destruction threatened is a death out of manhood, a destruction *quâ homo*. Such a conclusion seems to be warranted by these considerations:

1. Scripture and science unite in teaching that

man is the highest product of this created system. Scripture further affirms that he is made in the image of God and is the appointed heir to all His works. In his present form of being, however, subject to sin and death, he does not reach the true goal of manhood, nor enter upon his proper inheritance. His present form is provisional, temporary, perishable. He is now a candidate, in a limited and disciplinary sphere, for that immortal manhood, which is the completed image of the invisible God, and the heir to His authority and estate. The risen Jesus is the first-born in this new order of being, and, as such, all the forces of the universe have been made subject to Him. And we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, the "appointed Heir of all things." (Heb. i. 2.)

2. Embodiment is essential to manhood. Our bodies are necessary to give us place and title in this system of creation. They are the batteries through which we operate upon its forces, the instruments by which we are put into possession of its domain. This is the prerogative of manhood. And hence the importance of that crowning doctrine of the New Testament, the resurrection of the dead. *Embodied* immortality is the true goal of manhood. A disembodied ghost is not a man. It becomes an outcast in this system of creation, as were the bodiless demons, who in the first gospel times entered into the bodies of men, preferring

even to go into swine to disembodiment, and whom Jesus cast out. Saints, during the intermediate state, are not disembodied. (2 Cor. v.)*

* We are far from accepting, however, the explanation of this mystery, adopted from Swedenborg, and now widely received, which makes each man's resurrection to take place at death, and which empties the many passages which speak of a future signal triumph over death, at Christ's coming, of their meaning, or denies their full inspiration. (See Dr. J. M. Whiton's "Gospel of the Resurrection," page 266, *et passim.*) A true doctrine of the intermediate state is rather to be sought in a larger view of the fundamental teaching of the New Testament concerning the relation of believers to Christ. We are uniformly described as "in Christ," and as so incorporated into Him, as to constitute with Him one body. The whole body, Head and members, is called "the Christ." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) Why may not, therefore, the resurrection body of the Christ provide for all His members an embodied home until each one shall take on for himself a glorified humanity like unto His? If a legion of *evil* spirits could occupy one human body (Luke viii. 30), why may not the same be true, on the other side, and in the larger possibilities of the heavenly manhood, of the multitude of spirits of just men? If all the branches and twigs of the old trunk of humanity were germinally in Adam, the whole stock of the new manhood must be in Christ. He is the Vine and we the branches. Each branch of the vine shall become a separate shoot, and itself a vine at the resurrection of the dead. But, before that event, each bud in the vine, in virtue of the fact that it is a bud, must have an embodiment in the parent stock, a germinal body in the glorified body of Christ. And so, during the intermediate state, "*outhomed* from the body we are *inhomed* with the Lord." (2 Cor. v. 8, Gr.)

3. Disembodiment, therefore, is a death out of manhood. It is failure to attain the true goal of being, which is new creation after the pattern of the glorified humanity of Jesus. It is to be discrowned and dispossessed; an exile in the system of creation instead of an heir and lord.

4. Since "the wages of sin is death," there must be either utter extinction of being, or the death of the sinner *in his present form of being.* Destruction *quâ homo* would satisfy the terms of the sentence, execute the law, and be the proper and adequate penalty for incorrigible sin.

5. After the law is thus vindicated by the death of the sinner out of the rank of being in which he was created, it is not necessary to suppose that there is a further positive infliction of torment. There must be the torment of privation, the "suffering of loss," the outer darkness and nakedness, resulting from such degradation from so high an estate. But after the "eternal fire" of creation, out of whose womb all created forms first sprang, receives back and consumes its own, it is not necessary to think of it as a continuous fire of torment.

6. These naked spirits must yet be in the hands of the "God of the spirits of all flesh." What He purposes to do with them in the future is not plainly revealed. We have seen that they fail of the glory and blessedness of the world or age to

come. What the "ages to come" may have in store for them is not revealed. Scripture warrants at least a hope that they may be recovered from their outcast state on to a lower plane of embodied life than that occupied by the sons of men, who are exalted to the rank of sons of God.* Their degradation would, therefore, be their eternal punishment, without a necessity for their eternal misery. Their destruction from the high rank of completed manhood, and loss of the glory involved, would be their "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." (2 Thess. i. 9.) Such banishment would be an irreparable loss and degradation. It would be consignment to those outer circles of life and being, which are far away from the central life and glory. But such eternal punishment might not involve eternal woe and agony, nor eternal hatred of God and rebellion against His will. Such banished discrowned outcasts might, in due time, fall into lower ranks of being and condition in that kingdom in which all things must become subject to the one Lord.†

* See *e. g.* Ezek. xvi. 53–63; 1 Peter iii. 18–20.

† Even St. Augustine, who was one of the most severe of the fathers in his teaching about future punishment, admits that it may consist in degradation of being. A writer in *Brownson's Quarterly Review* for July, 1863, as quoted by Dr. Whiton, states that Augustine held that

Here, then, we think we have the outline of a doctrine of future punishment in harmony with Scripture, with reason, and with science.

To recapitulate: the forces of life in the universe are ever reaching out after higher forms. Man is the highest fruit of this created system. But he has not yet reached his ultimate form of being. His body must be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ, "according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." He is now the "First-Born from the dead" in this new order of manhood. But He has "many brethren," who are to "become the first fruits of God's creatures." All of the human race are not chosen to this high honor. Multitudes, to whom even the gospel is preached, "adjudge themselves unworthy of everlasting life." They do not reach, therefore, this high goal of immortal manhood. They die in their sins, and are destroyed *quoad homines.* This is the sentence of the law against them. The penalty being inflicted and the law satisfied, God is left free to do with them in the

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"eternal death is a subsidence into a lower form of life, a lapse into an inferior mode of existence, a privation of the highest vital influx from God in order to everlasting life. . . . There is no trace of the idea that those who die in sin lose all good of existence, become completely evil, and continue to grow everlastingly in the direction of an infinite wickedness, which merits a corresponding increase of pain."

future as He will. He cannot indeed raise them to the rank of being attained by those who, now that the glory of Jesus is hidden, have learned to call Him Lord. They have forfeited this high honor. But, on a lower plane of embodied life, and in lower ranks, they may be subjects and servants in that kingdom in which they might have been lords, "vessels unto dishonor," but still having a place in our Father's "great house." (2 Tim. ii. 20.)

Here also we have a doctrine which harmonizes what there is true in each one of the three great divisions of Christian thought upon this subject. Only bigotry can deny that there is a phase of truth in each one of these. But neither of them contains the whole truth. To borrow certain aphorisms from Joseph Cook, as applied to a different subject, "Neither of these doctrines is true apart from the others. Either one is true with the others." The truth that is in each of them is necessary to a complete doctrine.

Now the doctrine advanced concedes, 1. To the destructionists, that the Scripture alternative of life in Christ is death. But it affirms that this sentence pronounced against men is executed in their destruction *as men.* The sinner perishes out of manhood in such a way as to lose place and title in this highest rank of created being, with its infinite capabilities of knowing God and of inheriting His vast estate.

2. It concedes to the restorationists the unworthiness of that view of God which supposes that He must needs make place in His universe for eternal sin and hatred of Himself. It admits that all His creatures may be at last reconciled to Him on lower planes of life and intelligence and position in the grand economy of His kingdom in which He must be all in all.

3. It affirms, however, that such restoration must perpetuate the disgrace to which the loss of eternal life in Christ subjects the unbeliever. It teaches eternal punishment in an eternal degradation of the sinner's being from the high rank of sonship to God, and from the true goal of manhood, as His completed image and the lawful heir to all His wide dominions.

XV.

THE SONG OF MOSES AND OF THE LAMB.

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest.—REVELATION XV. 3, 4.

THERE are two songs of Moses given in the Pentateuch, one in the 15th chapter of Exodus, which he sang with the children of Israel after the overthrow of Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea. This is commonly regarded as the one referred to in the text. There is another song of Moses recorded near the close of Deuteronomy. This is especially the song of Moses the *servant* of God. While the hymn of triumph sung on the shores of the Red Sea lends its spirit to this song in the Revelation, its thoughts are derived mainly from the song in Deuteronomy. The fourth verse, which is the key-note of that song, is here quoted: "He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." This

is the key-note also of the song in the Revelation. It begins with an ascription of praise to God as the true and righteous One. And the issue in both is the same. In both, the nations rejoice in the manifested judgments of God.

The song of Moses, then, whose tones are here blended with that of the Lamb, is chiefly the one which, at the command of Jehovah, this servant of God put on record near the close of his life.

That song, I hesitate not to say, is one of the deepest passages in Holy Scripture. It was uttered at a momentous period in Israel's history. The wanderings in the desert were now over. The people stood upon the borders of the promised land. Moses, in a series of farewell discourses, had reviewed the way in which the Lord had led them during the forty years, and enforced upon them its solemn lessons. But with prophetic foresight he saw that, notwithstanding the Lord's special and wonderful dealings with them, the history of Israel in the future would be a succession of failures, as in the past. The Lord's own people, whom He had loved and chosen, for whom He had so signally interposed, and whom He had carried as upon eagle's wings through the desert, whom He had borne with and chastened as a father a son, would soon forget and forsake Him. And for such departure they must be punished. They must fail to enjoy that wealth of blessings which He had

just promised them, if obedient, and be wasted and destroyed under the blighting curses He had just threatened, until at last their enemies would gloat in a triumph over them that seemed complete and without remedy.

In foresight, then, of this sad history, Moses was commanded to write all the words of this song, and to teach it to them for a testimony. It stands here as a monumental witness for God, erected at this solemn juncture in Israel's history by His most eminent servant, whom God was about to take to Himself.

The circumstances, therefore, of its utterance, as well as the import of its words, combine to make this one of the most impressive passages in the Bible. And that we do not overestimate its importance is further proved by the frequency with which it is quoted or referred to by later writers. The strains of this song run all through the Psalms. All the prophets borrow colorings from it with which to paint their visions of the future. It is quoted by Paul in his epistle to the Romans, in which he discusses the mystery of God's dealings with Israel, and their bearing upon the Gentiles, who, in the words of this song, are summoned to rejoice with them. "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people." And, as we have seen, the strains of this song, which may be called the judgment song, are caught up by the victors

on the sea of glass, and blended with the redemption song, the song of the Lamb.

We do not, then, exaggerate the importance of this song. It is one of the key-passages of Scripture. It opens up whole volumes of the divine administration.

It presents these salient features:

1. It recounts God's gracious dealings with Israel, and unfolds the sad story of their future apostasies.

2. It affirms that the righteousness of God will be vindicated, and that they must suffer the full measure of wrath their sins deserved.

3. It anticipates the triumph of their enemies in this result, and especially of a great enemy, who can be no other than Satan, the great foe of God and man.

4. It declares that the nations, who are to be the instruments of the divine judgments against Israel, must themselves be destroyed before the consuming fire of His anger.

5. It especially proclaims a series of revenges upon the great enemy referred to.

6. So broad would be the claims of God's righteousness in the case, so deep the burning of His anger, that it would finally involve the earth and the system of nature, in which the invisible enemies of God and His people are intrenched.

This chapter contains the first mention in the

Bible of the fire of hell: "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains." (vs. 22.) Here there seems to be a foregleam of that judgment by fire often alluded to in the New Testament, which, however, becomes to the earth a renovating baptism, cleansing both the heavens and earth from "all things that offend," and issuing in the new heavens and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

7. These judgments upon the enemies, who had corrupted His people, would issue in their deliverance: "For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He seeth that their power is gone and there is none shut up or left."

8. The God, who is to work out these results, here proclaims Himself as the Lord over death as well as life, able to wound and to heal, to kill and to make alive. Not even the triumph of death over His people would defeat His purpose to restore and heal them. Here the resurrection of Christ, which is the grand centre of all God's redemptive processes, is foreshadowed.

9. In the future salvation with which He should mercifully bless His land and people, all the nations, who had themselves suffered under the heavy hand of His judgments, were invited to

rejoice. "The beginning of revenges upon the enemy" should not come to an ending until the whole field had been cleared of these hostile powers, whether intrenched on earth or in the heavens, who had crushed down the human race, Jew and Gentile, into this bondage to sin and death. And so the song closes: "Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people: for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful unto His land, and to His people."

The great feature, then, of this song of Moses is, its exhibition of the inflexible righteousness of God and of the deep, far-reaching judgments required for its vindication. And yet, breaking through the clouds and darkness which are round about His throne, there is the light of His supernal love. Great thoughts of mercy break out at the close. The light that shines here from the sun of righteousness is seen to contain not only the red rays of lurid wrath, but the violet of peace and love. So all God's Word is a prism which unravels and so reveals to us that glory whose unblended rays we could not gaze upon and live. These two great features of the divine character, righteousness and love, with two corresponding lines of administration, are traced all through the Bible. Even the law which came by Moses was paralleled by a sacrificial system which set forth

grace toward the law-breaker. And so the song of Moses, which sings of judgment, sings of mercy at the close. The judgment song breaks out into the redemption song. And these two diverse strains run through all subsequent psalm and prophecy, and leave their traces all along the track of history, both sacred and profane. The history of every Gentile nation, as well as that of Israel, illustrates this.

But our text shows that the notes of this song of Moses shall hereafter run into unison with those of the song of the Lamb. This means that these parellel lines of divine dealing run together. This book of the Apocalypse warns us that there is a wrath of the Lamb as well as a wrath of God. The fire, of which Moses forewarns us, goes on burning, even under the administration of the Lamb, until all God's enemies have perished, and Satan is cast into the lake of fire prepared for him and his angels. But the joy of the text is that hereafter the songs of judgment and redemption are blended. No more two, but one song shall fill the vaulted skies. The apparently discordant features of the divine government are to be harmonized. Neither is to be sacrificed. The law will not be set aside. But love shall not be foiled of its ends. And men shall glory as much in God's righteousness, when His judgments are made manifest, as they rejoice in His love. One anthem

shall ascend from earth's ransomed myriads. And that shall not be the song of Moses, nor of the Lamb only, but the song of Moses and of the Lamb. The harmony will be far richer, deeper, for the blending. The minor chords of judgment will melt into the symphonies of love, and flow on with them in one eternal tide of melody.

The prime lesson we derive, then, from this subject is one of calm confidence in God, the Judge of all the earth. "Just and true are all His ways." There are dark mysteries in the book of divine providence. We are every day staggered by them. There are even darker mysteries in His Word. We read there about an everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. We hear the lips of Jesus pronouncing the doom, "Depart, ye cursed." We read of a great day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. And yet we read that God is love. Jesus came to tell us of His infinite tender compassion. He spake the parable of the prodigal son; He declared that God so loved the world, not a part of it, but the *world*, as to give for its redemption His only-begotten Son. We read that His love in Jesus Christ is an ocean without bottom and without shore. How, then, can these things be reconciled? These aspects of the divine character seem to contradict and to neutralize each other. Men say, "No earthly father would punish so his child. Is

the heavenly Father less kind?" We may not be able to reconcile these statements. Thank God, it is not our business to reconcile them. We are not required to harden these "hard sayings" into dogmas, nor compress them into formulas which shall satisfy us, much less silence the cavilings of the unbelieving mind. No human creed is broad enough nor deep enough to take in all that may be known of God. And there are some secret things which, as this song tells us, remain sealed up among His treasures. But while we cannot explain all God's ways to men, nor harmonize them, we rejoice to know that they are to be explained and reconciled. The Bible assures us that the divine administrations are not limited to one age or world, or even to ages. There are ages upon ages to come. The inspired seer transports us here into an age to come, and bids us listen to a song which sings of both mercy and judgment. We hear the tones of the song of Moses and of the Lamb roll down from heaven to earth and ascend again in antiphony from earth to heaven.

I may not understand, then, these deep things of God. I may not satisfy the cavil of every objector, nor even the honest doubt of the sincere seeker after truth. I may fail to remove the sad misgivings of tender loving souls. But, though I cannot see behind the veil, I can look forward with joy to that time when the covering which

now hides from us our Father, God, shall be taken away, and we shall see His face. It is enough for me to know that the lurid rays of His wrath and the violet rays of His peace and love blend together in that pure white light which is the splendor and the joy of heaven, and that even the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of this glory as the waters cover the sea. It is enough to know that this song shall fill the high arches of heaven, and be sent back with glad acclaim from the redeemed on earth. "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy judgments are made manifest."

A lesson still more practical is, that all God's discipline of *us* in this world is designed to prepare us to sing this song. We have seen that in His discipline of His ancient people, and of the Gentiles also, these counter-principles of a righteousness that cannot abate its claims, and of a love that cannot be balked of its object, stand side by side. One does not yield to the other. So it is with our individual redemption. Which of us cannot recognize these two parallel lines of divine dealing through all our lives past? We all, like the Psalmist, can say, "I will sing of mercy and

of judgment." God's righteousness has encompassed us on every side. Our sins have found us out. The sins of our fathers have been visited upon us. The rod of His chastisement has not been spared. We can trace these fatherly corrections through our business, our households, our whole environment, and in our persons. It is a mistake to suppose that our forgiveness through Christ annuls or sets aside the law by which God has forever attached suffering to sin. The words of Nathan to David show the true doctrine concerning this. (2 Sam. xii.) By the Lord's command he told the monarch, "The Lord hath put away thy sin. Thou shalt not die." His life was redeemed. But it must also now be purified by suffering. And hence the prophet goes on to tell him how he must suffer in his person, in his family, in his kingdom. And the subsequent history of David fully illustrates how the fire of God's anger burnt against him to consume the evil out of his life and to purify and uplift his throne. And here we see how mercy came in. These afflictions were made the salutary means of great good. David often confesses this. God was redeeming him in this way of judgment. And so with us. Our redemption through Christ secures for our old nature of sin no exemption. It is to Christians that Paul writes, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth,

that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." (Gal. vi. 7, 8.) There is no escape from this law. The redemption of Christ proceeds upon the fact that sentence of death has been passed upon the old man in us and that we have accepted it. When we come to the cross, we confess judgment against ourselves in that character. We consent to die out of the old life of sin that we may live anew in Christ Jesus. And God's discipline of us accords with this judgment. It executes this sentence. The old self is handed over to death. And wisely, tenderly, as we are able to bear it, the slow fire of His anger burns against all that is evil in our lives. But the anger is only a surface flame on a deeper fire of love. The chastening is for our profit. The light affliction works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Hence, with David, we sing, " Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." We learn to bless the hand that smites, because we know it is our Father's hand of love.

So all through our lives these two lines of His dealing run side by side, until, as to the body at least, sin exacts its full wages, which are death. But here the loving hand of Him who wounds and heals, who kills and makes alive (vs. 39), comes in to convert this victory over us of the last enemy into eternal triumph. Dying with

Christ, we rise and reign with Him in endless life.

And so, after all the results of His dealing with us are summed up, and we come to review the way by which He has led us, we shall see how, in the whole conduct of our earthly discipline, Mercy and Truth meet together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other; how the grace of God in our salvation has only magnified the law and made it honorable. And so, with all God's redeemed of every land and every name, we shall be prepared to sing the song of Moses as well as of the Lamb. So shall the song of our redemption be to us forever richer and purer because its strains are mingled with the song of judgment. And our lives, henceforth harmonized with the life of God, in whom all things live, shall be all the broader and stronger, and so fitted for those ranges of activity and enjoyment which He is preparing for His sons in the coming ages.

And let us never forget that all this wealth of blessing, this joy out of sorrow, this gold out of dross, this white robe out of tribulation, this crown surmounting the cross, is due to the grace that gave us Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away our sins. These songs of redemption are the songs of *His* enthronement as Lord over all. This splendor of heaven and this light that shall yet bathe the earth is not the glory of God alone,

but of God and the Lamb. Even He, as man, was judged for us in the flesh and endured the curse of the law. And we, redeemed by His blood, and reaching the same heights through the same lowly way of the cross, shall sing with Him both of judgment and of victory, and evermore praise Him as the Conquering Captain of our salvation.

And now unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

THE END.

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